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Dedicated

To My Wife

Without Whose

Constant Encouragement

this work would never

have been completed.

A. S. P. AYYAR.

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INTRODUCTION

THE warm reception accorded by the critics, journals and the general public to my historical novel "Baladitya," and the eagerness with which it has been translated into several Indian languages have emboldened me to write this novel about an even more interesting period of Indian History. Nothing is more appropriate in the present glorious renaissance period of India, when Eastern and Western ideas are stirring the people into various kinds of political, artistic and religious expression peculiarly their own, than depicting the story of the time when India came first into violent contact with the greatest and most civilised nation in Europe then—the Greeks. The picture from the "Sanchi Tope" in the Frontispiece appears to me to be that of Chandragupta and Seleukos when they became friends after the Treaty in 303 B.C., and speaks for itself. The Lotus of India, held by Chandragupta, mingled then on equal terms with the "Grapes," of Europe, held by Seleukos. Both the heroes were appropriately seated on lions. Is it too fanciful to imagine that the Lotus of India and the Grapes of Europe will mingle once more through the Englishman seated on the British Lion and the Indian seated on an Elephant?

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Plenty of material is available about Alexander's invasion of India, though only from the Greek side. It is curious that no Indian Book—Hindu, Buddhist or Jain—mentions him, and so we have no Indian account of his doings in this country. About Chandragupta, we have a few meagre accounts by Greek and Latin Writers and some marvellous, incredible, highly coloured and inconsistent accounts in Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist romance-histories, besides a famous drama, the *Mudrarakshasa*, dealing with a portion of his life. The drama is an absorbingly interesting one, despite the fact that there is no love-story in it. It is also evidently based on a living tradition. But it was written some centuries after the fall of the Mauryas, and seems to be not wholly reliable regarding the historical facts. In it Chandragupta is overshadowed by Châṇakya.

INDIAN LEGENDS

The Hindu, Buddhist and Jain legends about Chandragupta and Châṇakya are certainly older than the play. Despite their apparent incredibility, it is possible for Indians to make out the meaning of the wild legends by discounting their hyperbole. Thus, when Maurya is said to have had a hundred sons, it is probable that what is meant was that he had a hundred clansmen who followed him about, and were regarded by him like sons. A highland Chieftain of old, a Rajput ruler, and a Hindu Caste-head, all used to regard their followers as their sons. This is found even now in the Malayalam or Kanarese expression of "*Makkale*" (sons) applied by a Chief to his followers. It is akin to the use of the expression "*brother*" by the "Society of Friends." So too, Chandragupta, though called a "son" of Maurya in the legend, may very well be a "grandson," as, among

the Hindus, the word "*son*" may mean "son," "son's son," or "son's son's son" even in law, for purposes of inheritance. I also consider it very probable, from a scrutiny of the available materials, that Chandragupta was descended from Mahanandin, of the old and reputable Nandas, and that he was of nobler origin than the usurping *Nava-Nandas* (new Nandas) whom he replaced.

CHANAKYA & CHANDRAGUPTA

It is also quite clear that too much credit has been given in Hindu, Buddhist and Jain legends to Chânakya, and too little to Chandragupta, whereas I have no doubt that both formed an ideal combination. Chanakya being Warwick and Bismarck combined, and Chandragupta Wilhelm I and Moltke combined. The Greek and Roman accounts, as usual, give the necessary corrective, by ascribing the conquest of India solely to Chandragupta and by saying nothing at all about Chanakya.

RISE OF CHANDRAGUPTA

Thus, Justin says :—" India after the death of Alexander had shaken, as it were, the yoke of servitude from its neck and put his Governors to death. The author of this liberation was Sandrocottus. But, after his victory he forfeited by his tyranny all title to the name of Liberator, for he oppressed with servitude the very people whom he had emancipated from foreign thraldom. He was born in humble life, but was stimulated to aspire to regal power by supernatural encouragement; for, having offended Alexander by his boldness of speech, and orders being given to kill him, he saved himself by swiftness of foot, and while he was lying asleep after his fatigue, a lion of great size having come up to him licked off with his tongue the sweat that was running from him, and after gently waking him, left him. Being first prompted by this prodigy to conceive hopes of royal dignity, he drew together a band of robbers and solicited the Indians to support his new sovereignty. Some time after, as

he was going to war with the Generals of Alexander, a wild elephant of great bulk presented itself before him of its own accord and, as tamed down in gentleness, took him on its back and became his guide in the war and conspicuous in fields of battle. Sandrocottus, having thus acquired a throne, was in possession of India, when Seleucos was laying the foundations of his future greatness."

And Plutarch writes:—"And not long afterwards Androkottos, who had by that time mounted the throne, presented Seleukos with 500 elephants, and overran and subdued the whole of India with an army of 600,000 men."

ARGUMENTUM EX SILENTIO

The omission of the name of Chanakya by the classical writers, and the omission to mention Chandragupta, or Pataliputra, or Alexander, or Seleukos in the whole of Kautalya's *Arthasastra* have made some Western scholars doubt the very existence of Chanakya himself. But this *Argumentum ex Silentio* is, of course, dangerous and inconclusive. As Professor Macdonnel says (Pages 150-151 of his "Sanskrit Literature.")

"A good illustration of the dangers of the *Argumentum ex Silentio* is furnished by the fact that salt, the most necessary of minerals, is never once mentioned in the *Rigveda*. And yet the Northern Punjab is the very part of India where it most abounds. It occurs in the Salt Range, between the *Indus* and the *Jhelum*, in such quantities that the Greek Companions of Alexander, according to Strabo, asserted the supply to be sufficient for the wants of the whole of India."

This point is illustrated also by another equally remarkable fact. Asoka does not mention his father Bindusara, or his grandfather Chandragupta, in any of his inscriptions. Can this show that he was not aware of them, or was not descended from them? Even his own name is mentioned by him only once in all his inscriptions, namely, in the Maski inscription discovered very much

later than the rest. The modern habit of referring to personal names was not so common in ancient times.

CHANAKYA'S TESTIMONY

Chanakya expressly says in his Arthasastra:—"Having perused all the sciences and having fully observed the forms of writs in vogue, these rules of writing royal writs have been laid down by Kautalya for the sake of Narendra" (Book II, Chapter X).

In this Chapter there are writs directing *Viceroys* to protect and give material help to travellers either on the roads or in the interior of the country, thus showing that Narendra ruled a big empire. The *Brahmanda Purana* identifies 'Narendra' with Chandragupta. Again, in Book XV, Chanakya, *alias* Vishnugupta, says,

"This Sastra has been made by him who, from intolerance of misrule, quickly rescued the scriptures and the science of weapons and the earth which had passed to the Nanda king."

It is even now quite unusual for Indians living in the Indian States to name their kings by their personal names. So it was but natural for Chanakya to refer to Chandragupta as 'Narendra,' instead of as Chandragupta, especially when he calls himself 'Vishnugupta.' He did not mention Pataliputra by name in his *Arthasastra*, possibly because the book was intended to be a text-book on Politics and Economics for all countries and for all time, and was not a description of the Mauryan Empire or of Pataliputra. Again, in those days, people were fond of quoting the names of famous kings of old and of very ancient cities, and not of reigning kings or recently-founded towns. Pataliputra was but a parvenu among India's ancient cities like Benares, Ayodhya, Kausambi, Kanyakubja, Indraprastha, Hastinapura, Ujjaini, etc. The fort there was built only in the time of the Buddha, by the Brahmin minister Vassakara (*Varshakara* or Rain-Maker) under the orders of

Ajatasatru, as a defence against the Lichchhavis of Vaisali. Even Rajagriha in Magadha was much older.

DID CHANAKYA EXIST?

That Chanakya is a real historical person is clear from his mentioning Kusadhvaja and the Ambhiya (named after Ambhi or Omphis) school of Politics in his *Arthasastra*. Kusadhvaja was razed to the ground by Alexander, and Ambhi disappears from history after 321 B. C. So, the author of the *Arthasastra*, Chanakya, must have lived and written the book before 300 B. C. Again there is the unanimous testimony of Hindus, Buddhists and Jains. These three rival groups had no motive to agree about such a person, if he did not exist. Even the Hindus had no special reason to take away the credit of Chandragupta's achievement by inventing a Brahmin, Chanakya, who exterminated the Nandas and had him crowned. The Buddhists and Jains, who did not love Brahmins over-much, had still less reason to do so. To add to this unanimous testimony, there is the express claim by Kautalya in his *Arthasastra* that he uprooted the Nandas, and wrote a certain chapter of the book for the sake of "Narendra," who is found to be no other than Chandragupta Maurya from the *Brahmanda Purana*. Nobody in India dared to dispute this proud claim. All accepted it as true.

BUDDHIST EVIDENCE

Another clinching argument about the reality of Chanakya and his achievements is supplied by the *Arya Manjusri Mulakalpa*, or the Buddhist Imperial History of India. The monkish author of this book had no love for Chanakya. *Odium theologicum*, the worst of all prejudices,

made him consign Chanakya to Hell for untold thousands of years (a *kalpa*) to suffer all kinds of tortures as a punishment for his political murders and other crimes. But even he never dreamt of denying Chanakya's existence or achievements.

He says, " Then we come to V (Vishnugupta), the Brahmin at Pataliputra. He will be the soul of anger, and a miracle-worker, and will destroy kings for an insult suffered by him owing to his poverty. He is called the 'King of Anger' and the 'Incarnation of Death.' He subdued the wicked and removed much evil, and augmented what was good. But, all said and done, that fool of a poverty-stricken Brahmin, carried away by his anger, took the king's life in revenge."

Again, " After Nanda, Chandragupta will become king. He wil rule without a rival. He will enjoy all the good things of life and will be very prosperous. He will be true to his coronation oath and to ***Dharma***. On the bad advice of his minister (Chanakya), he killed many people on account of which he was afflicted with poisonous carbuncles which brought on unconsciousness and death after he had weepingly placed on his throne at midnight his son Bindusara, who was still a boy (that is, below 25, the Hindu age for coronation). Bindusara's Prime Minister (Chanakya) was wicked. As Bindusara had in childish play made a ***Chaitya***, he was rewarded by being born in the royal Nanda house of Chandragupta. When a minor, he enjoyed great comforts. When he became an adult, he was bold, eloquent and tactful. His Prime Minister was Chanakya, 'the Soul of Anger.' 'the Incarnation of Death.' This bad Brahmin lived a long time and covered three reigns (that is, of Sukalpa Nanda, Chandragupta and Bindusara). When he finally left this body, he was consigned to Hell to undergo all kinds of tortures there for a *Kalpa*."

CHANDRAGUPTA'S END

The quotation above regarding the end of Chandragupta Maurya by diabetic carbuncles disposes of the late Jain legend that Chandragupta Maurya followed Bhadrabahusvamin, the Srutakevalin, to Sravana Belgola in Mysore, and committed

Sallekhana or suicide, by starvation there, in B. C. 297, along with his master. It shows conclusively that Chandragupta died weeping (and against his will) in his Palace at Pataliputra at midnight after having crowned his son Bindusara king. The Hindu *Puranas* too do not mention Chandragupta's abdication or death by starvation. They would not have omitted such picturesque details even if there had been such rumours. Thus, they repeat the legend (see *Brahmanda Purana*, 'Kaliyuga Vrittanta') that Samudragupta murdered his father and brother treacherously! Most important of all, even Asoka does not mention them in any of his inscriptions though the Brahmagiri, Siddhapura and Jatinga Ramesvara inscriptions of his are comparatively close to Sravana Belgola. It is unbelievable that an act of his grandfather considered by Indians to be highly spiritual, like *Sallekhana*, would not have been mentioned by Asoka when he took pains to mention even a minor spiritual act of his queen Karuvaki, the mother of Tivala. The Jain accounts are inconsistent and contradictory, and one account makes the Prabhachandra, who committed suicide, to be the grandson of Asoka! But, as Bhadrabahusvamin died in 297 B. C., and as Prabhachandra or Chandragupta Munindra was his disciple and died by starvation at the mouth of Bhadrabahu cave on Chandragiri hill along with Bhadrabahusvamin, it is obvious that he could not have been a grandson of Asoka. As he is termed in some Jain accounts as Chandragupta of Ujjain, and not Chandragupta of Pataliputra, I consider it to be quite likely that he was some other prince Chandragupta from Ujjain, and possibly a son of Rajavaishya Pushyagupta, Governor of Saurashtra under Chandragupta and constructor of the famous *Sudarsana* lake. That this family was noble and royal, and capable of producing remarkable men and women is clear. Asoka's

queen Devi Sakyakumari from Vedisagari near Ujjain, and her children, Mahendra and Sanghamitra, come readily to mind. So there is no intrinsic improbability in assigning Chandragupta Munindra or Prabhachandra also to this gifted house. This conclusion is strengthened by the curious fact that Yavana Tushaspha was the Governor of Saurashtra in Asoka's time, evidently because Pushyagupta's son had become a Jain monk and left no descendants behind.

CHANAKYA, A COCHIN TAMILIAN

Chanakya was in all probability a Southerner. His name "*Dramila*" shows him to be a Tamilian. Till the Andhra Empire fell in the third century A. D., "*Dramila*" or "*Dravida*" meant only a Tamilian. Even now the Andhras mean by "*Dravida*" a Tamilian. The *Arthasastra* shows an intimate knowledge of the South. The worship of *Kumara* and *Kumari* advocated there shows Chanakya to be a Tamilian from near Cape Comorin *(Kanya Kumari)*. The mention of products from obscure hills and rivers now in Cochin State makes it probable that he was from Muyirikkodu, or Muchiri, or Muziris, or Cranganore of the present day in the Cochin State, but then part of the Tamil country and a great centre of Tamil culture; *Malayalam* (the daughter of Tamil married to Sanskrit) had not yet been born. Kerala or the Malayalam country is the stronghold of *Atharva Veda* lore and of sorcerers, physicians and astrologers. It is quite easy to find there even to-day people who claim that they can kill others by incantations, and that they can make themselves were-wolves or *Odiyans*, or become even invisible. All the strange and wonderful things mentioned by Kautalya in the Fourteenth Book of his *Arthasastra* for injuring an enemy, such as making wonderful and delusive contrivances, oneself becoming

invisible, causing death, blindness, consumptive diseases, madness, etc., by *Mantras* and medicines, will find ready believers in the Kerala country. Thousands there believe even now in the feasibility and efficacy of those magic rites. The Tamils of Tanjore threaten "*to do Malayalam*" to their opponents, meaning "to do rites of Black-magic." So, it is more likely that Chanakya, the adept in *Atharva Veda* and the arch-exponent of magic and Black-art, was from Keralaputra, and not from the present Tamil Nadu. This is also the inference from the significant fact that even to-day the word "*Vastu*" means in Malabar and Cochin "houses, fields, gardens, buildings and tanks" as in the *Arthasastra*, and that this use is apparently not found in other parts of India. So too, in Kerala, even now, *Adi-aruthi* and *Avani-pirappu*, the end of *Ashadh* and the beginning of *Sravan*, are important as the end and beginning of the Hindu financial year, as in the *Arthasastra*. The proverb "*Chozhiyan Chindu Summa Iradu*" (A Chozhiyan's tuft will always be after some mischief or other) certainly refers to the mischief done by Chanakya's dangling tuft, and is an additional argument for Chanakya's being a Tamil. Of course, it is no argument against his being a native of Cranganore, as several *Chozhiya* (Chola Brahmin) colonies have existed in the Keralaputra country from time immemorial, and exist even now in Malabar, Cochin and Travancore.

ARTHASASTRA

Some Western scholars have tried to attack the *Arthasastra* as a Southern forgery, or at least as not the work of any Prime Minister of Chandragupta Maurya. They rely on the failure of Megasthenes to mention Chanakya to prove that Chanakya never existed. This is ridiculous, as already shown. Besides, the complete work of Megasthenes is not

available, only quotations and extracts being preserved. So it is unsafe to assert that he did not mention Chanakya at all. Even if he did not, it might be due to Chanakya's having been absent from Pataliputra during his visit, leaving Rakshasa, a very humdrum Minister, in charge. The fact that Asoka's inscriptions contain whole passages from Kautalya's *Arthasastra*, and that several terms therein can only be explained by referring to the *Arthasastra* shows the earlier chronology of the *Arthasastra* compared to those inscriptions which undoubtedly belong to the third century B. C. So, the *Arthasastra* must have been the work of Chanakya or Kautalya, the destroyer of the Navanandas, and the Prime Minister of Chandragupta Maurya, and of his son Bindusara Amitraghata, and must have existed in its present form at least by 300 B. C., and was therefore compiled by Kautalya according to the orders of 'Raja Narendra' or Chandragupta, as stated therein.

MAURYAN INVASION OF SOUTH INDIA

Some scholars, European and Indian, have also doubted the fact of a Mauryan invasion of South India. They have not cared to explain what motive the three ancient Tamil poets , Mamulanar, Parankorranar and Attiraiyanar, had to invent an invasion by the new Mauryas in aid of the Kosar and Vadugar and the defeat of the king of Mohur (Mohur in South Arcot) after the Mauryas, with their sky-kissing flags and sky-touching umbrella, had crossed the lofty Podiyil hill in their golden chariots by constructing a chariot-road across it. These poets were proud of their Tamil kings and troops, and would not have invented a defeat for them by the Mauryas. They knew about the *Nava-Nandas* and their hoarded wealth. Again, the *Arthasastra* deals with the construction of chariot-roads.

Several ancient inscriptions in South India mention the Nanda and Mauryan rule in Kuntala, etc. The fact that some early South Indian Kings claimed descent from the Mauryas also supports the truth of this Mauryan invasion of the extreme South of India. So too, the significant fact that in "Rock Edits" II and III of Asoka the kings of the Chola, Pandya, Keralaputra and Satyaputra countries are not named whereas the kings of Syria, Egypt, Macedonia, Cyrene, and Epirus are named as Antiochos, Ptolemy, Antigonos, Magos and Alexander. This suggests that the four southern kings and the king of Ceylon were feudatories of the Mauryan Emperor, who thus referred to them familiarly, without mentioning their names, as the Maharajas of Mysore, Cochin and Travancore would be mentioned now by the Viceroy or King-Emperor.

CHANDRAGUPTA OFFENDED ALEXANDER

So too, some historians have made an emendation in Justin's account of Chandragupta quoted above, and have asserted that Chandragupta did not offend Alexander and did not escape death at his hands by a timely flight. They pretend that he only offended the Nanda king and escaped death at his hands by fleeing from him. But this will be, in my opinion, taking an unwarranted and unnecessary liberty with Justin. There is no account, Hindu, Jain, Buddhist or Greek, regarding *Chandragupta's* having offended Nanda by his boldness of speech, and therefore his being ordered to be killed, and escaping by a flight, and of a lion's having licked off his perspiration when he was tired and sleeping after the flight. Indian accounts show that *Chanakya* offended Nanda by his boldness of speech, and was ordered to be put to death, and that he escaped the punishment through the intervention of

Rakshasa. Nobody can *assume* such a quarrel of Chandragupta with Nanda and emend Justin. The very fact that lions did not exist near Pataliputra, where Nanda was, but abounded in the desert close to the Punjab, where Alexander was, also shows that the quarrel was really with *Alexander*, as Justin says. Chandragupta admittedly met Alexander as stated expressly by Plutarch. If he did not quarrel with him, and was ordered to be killed, and escaped death only by flight, why did he attack and kill his Captains? The statement of Justin quoted above, read as a whole, shows beyond reasonable doubt that the quarrel was with Alexander, and that the escape too was from death at Alexander's hands. The emendation of "*Alexandrum*" to "*Nandrum*" made by Gutschmid and accepted by Mc Crindle, Vincent Smith and others is not justified by inevitable necessity. Nobody need wonder at a proud young Indian prince like Chandragupta irritating Alexander at the very first meeting with him. Alexander was a highly irritable man when his phenomenal vanity was wounded, and was quite capable of killing or ordering to be killed the unfortunate individuals who thus wounded his insane pride. His killing even his intimate friend Kleitos for such a reason, his heartless and insensate killing of Kallisthenes Philotas and Parmenion afford ample proof of this.

PARVATAKA IS POROS SENIOR

Some scholars have identified "*Parvataka*" in the *Mudrarakshasa* with some assumed king of Nepal; others have identified him with Seleukos; and some have identified him with Poros Senior. I am of opinion that it was Poros Senior. He alone was powerful enough at that time to have the kings of Kashmir, Malaya, Kuluta, Sind and Saurashtra as his feudatory allies and to have Yavana,

Parsika, Kirata, Kambhoja and Bahlika mercenaries. No king of Nepal could have had these as followers. Besides, the statement that the kings of Kashmir, Malaya and Kuluta coveted the territory of Parvataka shows that his territory was in between theirs, and this fits in with Poros's known territories. The fact that Parvataka was accustomed to have Hindu funeral ceremonies disposes of Seleukos as a possibility, besides the fact that Seleukos received only some powerful aphrodisiacs from Chandragupta and not a poison-maid ! The name "*Parvataka*" for Poros, or Paurava, need not disturb us. Abhisara and Arsakes, the lords of the mountains between Kashmir and the Punjab, were vassals of Poros Senior. So he might have rightly called himself *Parvateswara* ("lord of the mountains") or *Parvataka* ("the man of the mountains"). Of course' the Hindus of the Gangetic valley were only too glad to call him "Parvataka". or mountaineer, punning on his proud claim to be a "Paurava." By the Mauryan times the Punjab and the north-west, the land of the *Vedas,* had come to be regarded by the arrogant Hindus of the Gangetic valley as anything but sacred, while the people were looked upon either as low Hindus, or even as *Mlechchhas*. This opinion is reflected in many *Puranas* and *Dharma Sastras*. The Persian conquest of the north-west made this position even worse. For the Persians and the Hindus, first cousins, hated one another with the proverbial hatred of first cousins. The gods *(asuras)* ot the Persians became the demons of the Hindus, and the gods *(devas)* of the Hindus became demons of the Persians. The term "*Aryas,*" applied proudly by the Hindus to themselves as meaning "gentlemen," was used by the Persians to mean "low fellows!" No wonder, then, that the Hindus of the northwest fell still lower in the estimation of their eastern brethren by their contact with the Persians. That Parvataka and Malayaketu

had a lady Aide-de-camp (Vijaya), a Chamberlain (Jajali) and a Commander in chief (Sekharasena) just like the Nanda and Maurya kings also shows that they could not be rulers of the then backward Nepal, and must have been rulers of the Punjab. *Malayaketu* means "the destroyer of Malaya," and perhaps refers to some warlike exploits of that prince when he made the king of Malaya[1] Poros's and his vassal.

POROS JUNIOR

The last authentic mention of Poros Senior in Greek accounts is in 321 B. C. when he was confirmed in his territories in the Punjab and Sind at the Second Partition of Alexander's Empire at Triparadeisos. So, there is nothing improbable in his having been killed at Pataliputra late in 321 B. C. when he went there lured by Chanakya's tempting offer. The Poros murdered by Eudemos treacherously in 317 B. C. could have been, and in my opinion was, Poros Junior, the nephew of Poros Senior, as he had only 120 elephants whereas Poros Senior had 200 elephants even at the battle of the *Hydaspes* and must have vastly increased their number after the great augmentation of his territories by Alexander. Besides, Poros Senior, who held his own with Alexander, could not have been tricked so easily by Eudemos. Nor could a giant like him, with the marvellous and impervious coat-of-mail described by the Greek writers, have been murdered so suddenly by Eudemos. The other Poros, a far feebler character, could, of course, have been tricked and murdered.

OMPHIS

Now a word about Omphis. The last time we hear of him authentically is in 321 B.C., when he was confirmed in

1. Garhwal.

his dominions between the *Indus* and *Hydaspes* at the Second Partition at Triparadeisos. Then we hear nothing of him at all. When the curtain rises again, Takshasila is the head-quarters of the Mauryan Viceroy of Uttarapatha, and is directly administered by him. All trace of Omphis and his relatives has gone. Though the citizens of Takshasila were in revolt both under Bindusara and under Asoka, owing to alleged insults to them by the wicked Ministers *(dushta amatya)*, they take care to explain that they are loyal to the Mauryan Emperor and Viceroy, and have grievances only against the wicked Ministers who were heaping insults on them. This shows that Omphis's line was extinct, and, even if some branches survived, evoked no loyalty or even fond memories. So it is but appropriate to make Omphis childless, and to make him commit suicide after all the Greeks had left him, and so could not record that picturesque event which they did not witness.

A NOVELIST'S LIBERTY

In writing this novel, I have tried, as far as possible, not to go against proved historical facts of importance, whether contained in the *Arthasastra* or *Mudrarakshasa*. or in the Edicts and Monuments, or in the Buddhist and Jain accounts, or in the Greek accounts, most of which have been collected in that excellent book "Alexander's Invasion of India" by Mc Crindle. But where history is silent, or speaks with no certain voice, I have taken a novelist's liberty. The writer of a historical novel is not bound to stick to proved historical facts, and may allow his fancy to roam at will, in the realm of the unknown.

In conclusion, it is my pleasant duty to render my heartfelt thanks to my friends Principal Sahasranama Iyer

of Trivandrum, Dr. Vaidyanathaswami of Madras, and Mr. T. A. Swaminatha Aiyar, Retired Editor of the "*Arya*," Madras, for going through the manuscript and offering their valuable criticism.

A. S. P. AYYAR.

CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL

MEN

1. Alexander the Great.
2. Chandragupta Maurya, Emperor of India.
3. Chanakya, Prime Minister of Chandragupta.
4. Sukalpa or Sumalya or Augramesa or Chandramesa, Nanda King of Magadha.
5. Sarvarthasiddhi, Paternal uncle of Sukalpa and his brothers.
6. Pandugati.
7. Bhutapala.
8. Rashtrapala.
9. Govishanaka.
10. Dasasiddhaka.
11. Kaivarta.
12. Dhanananda.

(6–12: Brothers of the Nanda King Sukalpa, and governors of provinces under him)

13. Bindusara, son of Chandragupta.
14. Susima or Sumana, son of Bindusara.
15. Asokavardhana, son of Bindusara.
16. Poros Senior or Pooru or Paurava or Parvataka or Parvateswara, King of the Jhelum Valley.
17. Malayaketu, son of Poros Senior.
18. Arjun, son of Poros Senior.
19. Poros Junior, nephew of Poros Senior.
20. Vairochaka, brother of Poros Senior.

21. Spatikesa or Spitakes, brother-in-law of Poros.
22. Omphis or Ambhi, King of Taxila.
23. Old Taxila, Omphis's father.
24. Satyasri Satkarni, King of the Andhras.
25. King of Patala.
26. King of Kalinga.
27. King of Kamarupa.
28. King of Nepal.
29. Asvajit, King of the Asvakas.
30. Abhisara, a king of a mountainous district near Kashmir.
31. Arasakes, a prince of a mountainous district near Kashmir.
32. Pushkaraksha, King of Kashmir.
33. Pushkaradatta, his son.
34. Chitravarman, King of the Kulutas, or Kulu Valley.
35. Mushikasena or Mousikanos, King of Upper Sind.
36. Sindhusena, or Susena, his son.
37. Simhanada, King of Malaya or Garhwal.
38. Meghanada or Magas, Persian Ruler of Cutch and Saurashtra.
39. Sambos or Sambhu or Sabhesa, King of Saindavavana.
40. Pradyumna, Abhisara's brother.
41. Hasti, Chief of Pushkalavati.
42. Sanjaya, cousin of Hasti.
43. Parthivasena or Portikanos or Asthikasena or Oxykanos, king of Maha-urdha in Sind.
44. Bhagela or Phegelas, a prince of the Punjab.
45. Talajhanga, Governor of Malavakot.
46. Lohitaksha, Prince of Malva.
47. The King of Mohur.
48. The King of Vatsa,
49. Seleukos Nikator, King of Syria and Babylon.

50. Antiochos, his son.
51. Saubhuti, King of the Salt Range.
52. Koinos, a General in Alexander's army.
53. Philippos, Satrap of Upper Indus Valley.
54. Peithon son of Agenor, Satrap of Lower Indus Valley.
55. Nearchos, Admiral of Alexander.
56. Krateros, a General of Alexander.
57. Meleager, a General in Alexander's army.
58. Polysperchon, another General of Alexander.
59. Eudemos, Commander of a Thracian regiment in the Upper Indus Valley.
60. Eumenes, Secretary of Alexander.
61. Demetrios, General of Seleukos.
62. Aristoboulos, a Greek historian who accompanied Alexander.
63. Kritodemos of Cos, a Surgeon of Alexander.
64. Critobulous, another Surgeon of Alexander.
65. Peukestas.
66. Leonnatus.
67. Lysimachos.
68. Hephaistion.
69. Aristonous.
70. Perdikkas.
71. Ptolemy.
72. Peithon, son of Kreteuas.

(65–72: Companions of Alexander.)

73. Oxyartes, Alexander's father-in-law.
74. Onesikritos, Pilot of Alexander's ship.
75. Thoas.
76. Sibyrtios.

(75–76: Greek Satraps of Gedrosia.)

77. Megasthenes, Ambassador of Seleukos.
78. Tyriaspes.
79. Sitalkes.
80. Kleander.

(78–80: Satraps put to death by Alexander for misgovernment.)

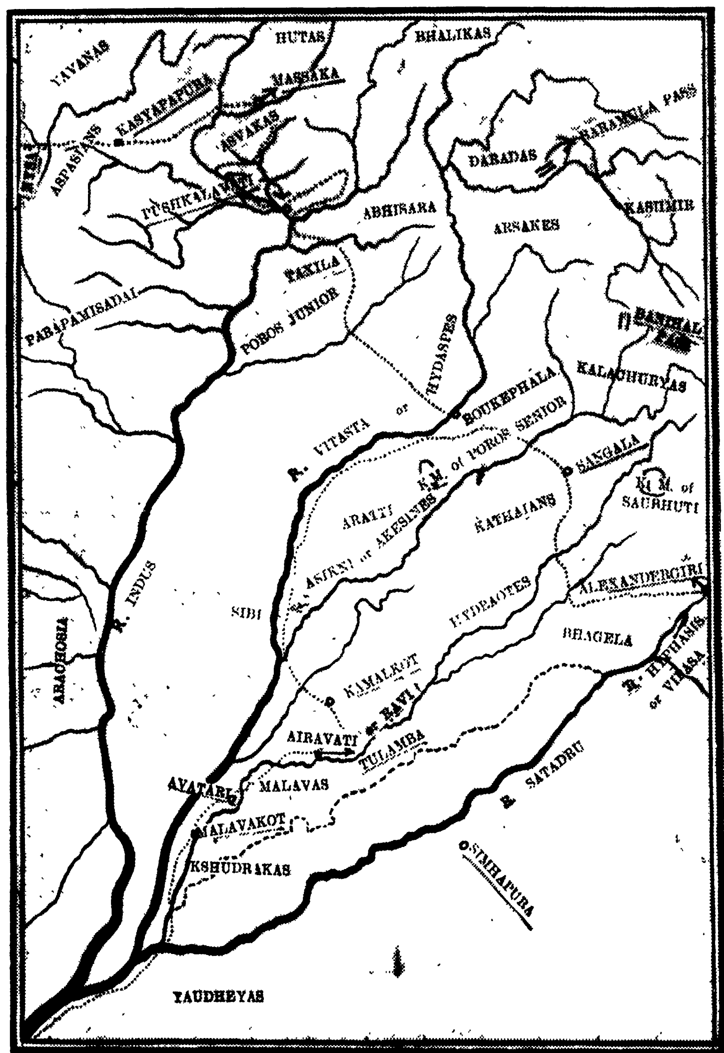
81. Dandami or Dandiswami, a Hindu Sanyasi.
82. Kalyanswami or Kalanos or Sobhanaswami or Sphines, another Sanyasi.
83. Vairantya, Chief of the Savaras.
84. Khondoveera, a Chief of the Khonds.
85. Pushyagupta, Governor of Saurashtra.
86. Chandragupta Munindra, his son.
87. Rakshasa or Subuddhisarman, Prime Minister of the Nandas and of Chandragupta.
88. Nakranasa.
89. Sakatala. } Ministers of the Nandas.
90. Siddharthaka.
91. Samiddharthaka.
92. Nipunaka.
93. Jeevasiddhi or Indusarman.
94. Udumbara. } Spies of Chanakya.
95. Sarangarava, Chanakya's pupil.
96. Chandanadasa, a big merchant of Pataliputra.
97. Sakatadasa, a petition writer.
98. Viradhagupta.
99. Priyamvadaka.
100. Karabhaka } Spies of Rakshasa.
101. Sthanakalasa, a bard.
102. Bhadrabhata, Commander of the Magadhan elephantry.
103. Purushadatta, Commander of the Magadhan cavalry and Viceroy of Suvarnagiri.
104. Dingarata, Commander of the Magadhan chariots
105. Simhabala, a General in the Magadhan army.
106. Chandrabhanu, the Magadhan Minister of Transport.
107. Balagupta, kinsman of Chandragupta and Viceroy of Takshasila.

108. Rajasena, Aide-de-camp of Chandragupta.
109. Bhagurayana, spy of Chanakya and later on Viceroy of Ujjain.
110. Daruvarman, head carpenter of Pataliputra.
111. Abhayadatta, palace physician at Pataliputra.
112. Vairavaraka, Head Mahout of Magadha.
113. Pramodaka, Bedroom Superintendent of Chandragupta.
114. Bibhatsaka, an assassin.
115. Vijayapala, City and Jail Superintendent, Pataliputra.
116. Kalapasika. } Magistrates of Pataliputra.
117. Dandapasika. }
118. Sankirtyayana, Chief Justice of Magadha.
119. Samudranatha, Admiral of Magadha.
120. Dharmaratna, Head of the Takshasila University.
121. Agnisarma, son-in-law of Chanakya.
122. Radhagupta, his son.
123. Devasarma, father of Subhdrangi.
124. Vaihinari, Chamberlain of Chandragupta.
125. Jajali, Chamberlain of Malayaketu.
126. Bhaddasala, Commander-in-chief of the Nandas.
127. Sekharasena, Commander-in-chief of Malayaketu.
128. Patrokles, A General and Admiral of Seleukos.
129. Subandhu, Rajaguru of the Nanda King.
130. Akshubhi or Akouphis, Mayor of Nysa.
131. Bhasa, a dramatist of Pataliputra.
132. Sasigupta. } Captains of Indian mercenaries.
133. Vijayavarman. }
134. Cleochares, Envoy of Alexander to Poros Senior.
135. Vijayasimha, King of Simhapura.
136. Meroes or Miresa, Friend or Poros Senior.
137. Horratus, a Macedonian boxer.

138. Dionippus, an Athenian boxer.
139. Antigonos, a General of Alexander.
140. Dirgharaksha, a General of Malayaketu.
141. Syama Sastri, a Pundit.
142. Visalaksha, another spy of Chanakya.
143. Karala, Ambassador of Taxila.
144. Bhagirathi, Chandragupta's spy.
145. Ambarisha, Chanakya's teacher.

WOMEN

1.	Santavati.	Queens of Chandragupta.
2.	Durdhara.	
3.	Devabhranta or Diophantes.	
4.	Suryakanta.	Queens of Bindusara.
5.	Lajjavati.	
6.	Subhadrangi.	
7.	Gautami.	Wife of Chanakya.
8.	Devaki.	Mother of Chanakya.
9.	Rajarajeswari.	Daughter of Chanakya.
10.	Meenakshi.	Wife of Syama Sastri.
11.	Paulomi.	Mother of Talajhanga.
12.	Swarnamayi.	Queen of Poros Senior.
13.	Kalapini or Kleophis.	Queen of Asvajit.
14.	Sonottara.	Female Aide-de-Camp of Chandragupta.
15.	Vijaya.	Female Aide-de-Camp of Malayaketu.
16.	Virasena.	Chief Dancing Girl of Magadha.
17.	Bahudanti.	Head of Chandragupta's Female Bodyguard.
18.	Rupamanjari.	Wife of Talajhanga.



ALEXANDER'S PUNJAB CAMPAIGN Page 1

THREE MEN OF DESTINY

CHAPTER I

THE DREAMER OF WORLD UNITY

IT was early in June 327 B.C. Alexander was sitting in the inner room of his royal pavilion at Nikaia, a small town to the west of modern Jalalabad, dictating to his secretary Eumenes a letter to his mother Olympias about his arduous campaigns across the Indian Parnassus[1], his marriage with Roxana, his return through the mighty passes, and his contemplated invasion of India and the sending of heralds to the rulers of Takshasila and the adjoining countries to meet him and tender their submission.

The personality of Alexander was striking and magnetic. He was of medium height, handsome, muscular and well-proportioned, and was in perfect health. His complexion was fair with a tinge of red in the face which was of remarkable beauty. His eyes were large and liquid though capable of flashing fire on occasions. His broad forehead and prominent eyebrows corrected the

1. The Hindu Kush.

softer lines of his mouth and chin. He carried his head with a slight inclination to the left. A peculiar and agreeable fragrance emanated from his body. He wore a short tunic of the Sicilian fashion, girt close round him, over a linen breastplate strongly quilted; his helmet, surmounted by a white plume, was of polished steel, the work of Theophilos; the gorget was of the same metal, and set with precious stones; the sword, his favourite weapon in battle, was a present from a Cyprian king and was not to be excelled for lightness or temper. His belt, deeply embossed with massive figures, was the most superb part of his armour. It was a gift from the Rhodians on which Helikon had exerted all his skill. His shield, lance and light greaves were by his side on a stand. His demeanour was dignified. His very appearance showed his indifference to danger and his supreme confidence in himself. His lips indicated a capacity for enjoyment, but his chin a readiness for sacrificing all pleasures for the sake of reaching the goal of his vaulting ambition. Here was a man born a king and fully conscious of the fact. There was a gleam in his eyes showing him to be a man entertaining the wildest dreams of world conquest and unification and deeming nothing impossible for him to do. With all that, his manner towards his secretary was gentle and considerate, and almost affectionate. In the outer room of the pavilion sat his companions Leonnatus, Lysimachos, Hephaistion, Aristonous, Perdikkas, Ptolemy and Peithon son of Krateuas.

Alexander paused a while in the middle of the dictation and glanced over the last paragraph of the letter of Olympias once more. It ran:—"Everybody here wonders at your victories and conquests, but I do not. They only *believe* that you are the son of Ammon, whereas I *know* that you are. Why should I be surprised at any of your

resounding triumphs when I know you to be the son of Ammon, the kinsman of Dionysius, Heracles and Achilles? Even before the consummation of my marriage, did I not dream that a thunderbolt fell upon my womb and kindled a fire which broke into flames that spread all about and were then extinguished? You have now burst upon Asia like a thunderbolt and the flames have spread far and wide. They will be extinguished when you are Lord of the World, and not merely Lord of Asia. So, march on, my son, and fulfil your destiny." Then, Alexander went on dictating "Yes, mother, I shall march on. I want to go to the very ends of the earth, to the shores of the Great Sea past the Indian Gulf and then sail round to the Persian Gulf and Egypt and Macedon. By the way, mother, the ocean is not visible from the top of the Indian Parnassus as Aristotle thought. It is farther away. But I want to make the boundaries of the earth the boundaries of my dominions. Having conquered the mighty Persian Empire with such ease, and made the wild tribesmen of the Oxus give back my Boukephalus, which they had stolen, by a mere threat to kill every one of them, and made even the Skythians move away their camps in a hurry so as to avoid me, I do not consider the conquest of the Indians a very difficult matter. Oh, how I long to meet the Indian wise men, the gymnosophists, and to sit on the shores of the Eastern sea listening to their tales of wisdom! Mother, Hellas and India must meet, with Persia as mediator. and Egypt as interpreter. I want to unite the world under me, to marry the east to the west, to abolish all artificial distinctions of race and country. How silly men are that they will resist me in this my laudable endeavour! I do not want to shed blood if I can avoid it. But, what can I do when they resist me? I am never so glad as when I can show clemency. But sometimes everything goes wrong, and I have to do

terrible things, as in the case of the killing of Kleitos. I hope the Indians will be reasonable".

Just as he had finished dictating the letter, Hephaistion entered the inner room, saluted him and said "Sire, old Taxila has come with his son Omphis[2] in a golden palanquin to make his submission". "Very good" said Alexander. "So our victories are having their effect on the Indians. What sort of a man is Taxila?" "He looks a shrewd old man with plenty of commonsense. He seems to be making his submission after cool deliberation and purely from motives of policy. Not so his son Omphis[2] who appears to be wholeheartedly for us and to be enamoured of our ways" said Hephaistion. "How did you carry on conversation with them?" asked Alexander. "Through Sasigupta who knows all the languages of Bactria and India besides talking Greek like an Athenian" said Hephaistion. "Ah, he has made himself useful ever since he joined us in Bactria after the defeat of Bessos" said Alexander "I then thought we had merely gained a brave captain. But he has been showing marked ability in other directions also. He ought to be immensely useful to us in our Indian campaign. Now, bring Taxila and Omphis to me, and ask Sasigupta also to come along to do the interpreting."

Hephaistion went out and returned with Taxila and Omphis and Sasigupta. Taxila was seventy years old and was dressed in a fine muslin embroidered with purple and gold. Omphis was thirty years younger and was dressed after the Greek fashion. Sasigupta was of the same age as Omphis and looked a typical captain in the army. He too was dressed in the Greek style. All the

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2. Ambhi.

three new-comers saluted Alexander. Alexander seated old Taxila and Omphis on cushions opposite to him and conversed with them through Sasigupta. "Well" said Alexander to old Taxila "You got my message? What is your reply?" Old Taxila smiled and said "Why should we make war on one another? It is clear from your message that you do not want to rob us of our water or necessary food, the only two things for which wise men will feel obliged to fight. As for other things, which the world considers as riches, if I have more of them than you, you are free to share with me. But if fortune has been more liberal to you than to me, I have no objection to be obliged to you." Alexander rose, and, embracing old Taxila warmly, said "Do you think that your kind words and courteous behaviour will save you from a fight? Oh, no, for I shall fight with you and see that however obliging you are you shall not have the better of me." He then accepted the presents and gave him much more valuable gifts. Old Taxila was overwhelmed by this generosity and said "The entire resources of my Kingdom are at your disposal. The great city of Taxila is awaiting the honour of your visit. The professors of our University are eager to discuss problems of medicine, grammar, astronomy, sculpture, architecture, music and philosophy with your savants. It is only Poros and Abhisara, who have no University in their territories, that want their soldiers to try the issue with yours. Poros is very vain now. Though he rules only a small extent of plain country he and his son have defeated Abhisara, Arsakes and the king of Malaya, all rulers of petty hill states. Poros therefore calls himself Parvateswara or 'lord of the mountains', and is eagerly looking forward to meet you." We shall only be too happy to oblige him. Our soldiers are not afraid to meet him, but our professors are not so confident of victory

over yours. What will be the resources of Poros ?" asked Alexander. "About 30000 infantry, 5000 cavalry, 500 chariots and 200 elephants," said Taxila, "And his ally, the king of Abhisara, has about 5000 infantry, 1000 cavalry, 50 chariots and 50 elephants." "Are these elephants of any use in war ?" asked Alexander. "I didn't think much of them at Arbela where there were fifteen Indian elephants in the centre of the Persian army." "That was because they were not enough to produce an effect. Besides, they were in a strange terrain. When massed, they are terrible. We Indians consider them to be so useful in war that elephants rank first in a king's army, the chariots, cavalry and infantry coming next in the order of importance. Indeed, we judge the strength of an army by the number of elephants it has. For this reason no private person can own a war elephant without a license from the king" said Taxila. "But, will these huge beasts be as tractable and mobile as horses ?" asked Alexander. "They are fully as tractable, under their trained mahouts. They are not so mobile, but are intended to serve as towers of strength in defence and as battering rams in an advance. The horses are afraid of the advance of elephantry. Infantrymen and archers too are afraid of being crushed under their feet" said Taxila. "I am not afraid of these elephants" said Alexander. "But your men may be" said Taxila. "Perhaps so, because of their unfamiliarity; but I don't think the fear will last. I wonder how anybody can love those brutes" said Alexander. "Oh, they are lovable in peace time. They are very docile, and add to the dignity of the processions of gods and kings. They tower above the beasts as you do among men" said Taxila. "What is the best way of tackling them in war ?" asked Alexander. "By so exasperating or frightening them that they run back panic-stricken into their own army and

break it up" said Taxila. "All right, we shall do that trick easily enough. Poros's towers of strength shall become his own engines of destruction. Now, my friend, my generals Hephaistion and Perdikkas will go with you with a strong army, conquer the tribes on the way and throw a bridge of boats across the Indus at Und[3] with your help. After seeing to it that Hephaistion and Perdikkas are safely encamped on this side of the Indus and after arranging for the boats, you can go to your own country and make everything ready for my advent and guard the other side of the river and your own city from Poros and Abhisara. I shall come to Und and join Hephaistion and Perdikkas with the rest of the army after subduing the more turbulent tribes north of the Kabul river. Together we shall cross the river and come to Taxila and tackle all the Poroses and Abhisaras and elephants in your country. I fear a contest with my friends, never one with my enemies. What do you think of it all?" asked Alexander turning to Omphis who was listening with the wide-open eyes of a hero-worshipper. "Nothing is impossible for you, great king" said Omphis. "The Indians have no leader like you. What are elephants, after all? They are only great in size, not great in quality. Ignorant mahouts can conquer them. How much more so a great king like you?" Alexander looked at him steadily for a couple of seconds, smiled, and said "That young man will go far". Old Taxila's face was wreathed in smiles. Then the interview terminated, and all rose. Sasigupta escorted old Taxila and Omphis back to their tents.

"Oh, he is the son of Zeus undoubtedly. What courage, what courtesy, what magnanimity! Tell us some true anecdotes about him. His wonderful career must have

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3. Ohind or Udabhandapura.

abounded in them" said old Taxila to Sasigupta. "Yes; I have heard almost all the noteworthy anecdotes about him,and some in his very presence. I shall tell you some whose authenticity is vouched for by Ptolemy, Hephaistion and Onesikritos. His father Philip, a prince of Macedon, met his mother Olympias, a princess of Epirus, at the mysteries of the Cabiri at Samothrace. The two became intimately acquainted there, and Philip resolved to ask for the hand of Olympias in marriage. But the god Zeus, called also Ammon, had already pitched upon Olympias and resolved to make her the mother of a hero who should conquer the known world. So, though Philip, in due course, sought her hand and got it and married her, on the day before the physical consummation of the marriage, Olympias dreamed that a thunderbolt fell upon her womb and kindled a fire which broke into flames that spread all about and were then extinguished. Philip dreamed at the same time that he had put upon his wife's womb a seal which had a lion as device. In terror he peeped into the room where his wife was sleeping and was surprised to see a huge serpent sleeping with her on her bed. The Delphic Oracle, which he consulted in terror, told him that the serpent was the god Ammon, that a son brave as a lion would be born to Olympias and Ammon, and that Philip would lose one of his eyes for his having peeped in when the god and Olympias were together. Philip lost one of his eyes, and, of course, a son brave as a lion, Alexander, was born" "Very interesting" said Taxila "That accounts for Alexander's reckless courage and generosity."

"Even as a boy, Alexander kept his royal dignity" continued Sasigupta "When asked whether he would compete in the toot-race in the Olympic games, he replied 'Yes, if all the other competitors are kings and princes'"

" So, he is a born artistocrat too " said Taxila approvingly " Not an upstart like Mahapadma ! "

" His father Philip was very fond of women, but not so Alexander. One day, just before he retired to bed, Philip made a beautiful dancing girl lie on Alexander's bed in order to tempt him. But when Alexander saw the woman, he turned on his heels in disgust and slept with his friend Ptolemy in the next room. The experiment was not repeated " said Sasigupta. " Ah, this *Brahmacharya*[4] is the source of his extraordinary powers of endurance " said Taxila " No wonder he crossed the Hindu Kush easily as our sages do the Himalayas ". " He had a tutor called Leonidas who taught him to live abstemiously " continued Sasigupta. " He would search his box daily to see if his mother had sent him any forbidden dainties. Alexander even now repeats the old teacher's maxim 'The best appetizer for breakfast is a night's march. The best appetizer for dinner is a light breakfast ' ". " A fine maxim " said Taxila " the less your wants, the greater your independence and capacity for achievement !" " His mother had his teacher Leonidas appointed for him in order to counteract his father's weaknesses. His father appointed a tutor called Aristotle, the wisest man in Greece, to teach him for 3 years, from 13 to 16, and counteract, by his robust commonsense the irrational fanaticism and ungovernable outbursts of temper to which his mother was subject. Aristotle did this so well that Alexander even now says about it, ' My father gave me life but Aristotle taught me how to live,' " said Sasigupta.

" Which of his qualities does he inherit from each parent ? " " From his father he has inherited a superb constitution, dauntless courage and an immense capacity

4. Continence..

for work. From his mother he has inherited a vivid imagination, a tremendous force of will and a mysterious affinity with the occult." "Yes, go on, tell us some more incidents of his life" said Ambhi. "When he was a boy, this horse Boukephalus or Bull-Head was offered by a Thessalian dealer to Philip for sale for 3000 *suvarnas*. None of Philip's men could mount or manage the horse. So Philip was about to ask the dealer to take it away when Alexander remarked 'What a horse to lose just because they are too stupid or too cowardly to manage him', and expressed his ability to mount and manage it, and was allowed to do so, and succeeded. He has kept the horse ever since. He loves it more than he does any man. When the tribesmen of the Oxus stole it, he threatened to kill all of them unless they restored it, and it was promptly restored." "It is a very fine horse" said Ambhi "but is getting old." "It has seen more wars and more countries than any of us" said Sasigupta.

"This world conquest idea, did he get it from India? Is it with any idea of performing a *Rajasuya*[5] that he does it?" asked Taxila. "No. His world conquest is more practical than our Rajasuya" said Sasigupta "He has no use for an empty world conqueror's title, like our kings. He means to rule the world through his satraps and feudatory kings." "Is that possible?" "We can't say now. But he considers it possible. The Persian ambassadors gave him a polo stick and a ball as gifts when he was a boy. He said to them even then 'This ball is the world, and I am the stick that will move it as it wishes.'" "That shows some confidence, doesn't it?" exclaimed Taxila. "When he set out on his expedition

5. A Hindu custom whereby a king conquered the world and celebrated this sacrifice to commemorate it.

to conquer the Persian Empire, considered then to be almost an impossible achievement, he showed his supreme confidence in his scheme by giving away the crown demesne lands of Macedonia to those nobles who could not accompany him, as compensation for their not getting their share of the expected loot from Persia. His mother Olympias twitted him for his folly, and one of the noble recipients even asked him 'And what have you reserved for yourself?' 'My hopes' replied Alexander." "Wonderful" said Ambhi, "and his hopes have been realised since." "Yes, haven't they? 50000 talents of gold from Susa, 120000 from Persepolis, 12000 from Pasargadae and 10000 from Ecbatana besides the revenues of all the countries from the Adriatic to the Indus" said Sasigupta. When Darius offered to cede all territories west of the Euphrates and to give his daughter in marriage to him, and when even Alexander's chief adviser Parmenio said 'If I were Alexander, I would accept it', prompt came Alexander's reply. 'So would I if I were Parmenio.' Alexander sent a reply to Darius asking him to treat him as supreme Lord of Asia, and not as an equal, and to beg of him what he wanted. He added that if he desired to marry his daughter he would do so without his permission." "But he has treated me as an equal" said Taxila. "Yes, he is generous to those who submit, and treats Greek, Persian and Indian alike. But he is relentless to those who defy him. He razed the Greek city of Thebes to the ground and sold the women and children into slavery. Similar was the treatment he meted out to Tyre and Gaza, Phoenician cities which stood loyally by Persia. He had Batis, an Ethiopian general who supported the Persian cause, dragged on the ground with a bronze ring driven through his feet till he died. He had Bessos flogged and torn asunder by being tied to two trees which were then let go. He had the wonderful

palace at Persepolis, costing many millions, burnt in revenge for the burning of the acropolis of Athens by the Persian King Xerxes. He killed his own playmate Kleitos for his insolence. So too, Parmenio and his son Philotas were executed for treason. Kallisthenes, the historian, who boasted that Alexander's fame rested not on what Alexander did but on what Kallisthenes wrote, and refused to prostrate himself before Alexander on the ground that only servile Asiatics would do so, has been kept in close prison as a dangerous traitor and will be executed some day or other" said Sasigupta. "That shows a man who will take a straight cut, instead of trying devious means" said Taxila. "You are right" said Sasigupta, "There was a famous knot in the city of Gordium called the Gordian knot. It was tied on a rope of bark to which was fastened the yoke of the wagon on which Midas had been carried into the city on the day when the people chose him as their king. Whoever untied it was said to be sure to become the Lord of Asia. Alexander scrutinised it, saw that it was far too complicated a knot to be untied, and so took his sword and cut it at one stroke. There was rain and thunder soon afterwards." "Alas" said Taxila "If he had been patient and had untied the knot, it would have been better. By using the sword to cut it, and to conquer Asia, he has made the solution rest on force instead of on love. Hereafter, Europe and Asia will freely try the sword to conquer each other till, centuries hence, some one ties up the severed knot and ensures peace. The chords of the heart are not to be torn asunder with a sword like that."

"But, let all kings and cities of India be on their guard and submit to Alexander on his demand, or be prepared for the fate of Thebes or Tyre or Gaza" said Sasigupta.

"Why should we risk his anger? Our Takshasila was once subject to the Persian Empire of which Alexander has now become master. So we shall renew our submission and tribute. Our mud pot cannot afford to knock against his iron pot. Let Poros, who thinks he is a brass pot, try his luck and get his deserts. Alexander is, any day, better than Poros. I never heard of Poros giving return presents to those who swore him allegiance" said Taxila. By this time the tents were reached, and Taxila and Ambhi thanked Sasigupta and went inside.

Sasigupta returned to Alexander who was then with Hephaistion and Krateros. He said to Alexander "Old Taxila was delighted beyond words and spoke over and over again. 'He is the son of Zeus undoubtedly. What courage, what courtesy, what magnanimity!' He and his son made me narrate some of your exploits and were delighted with them." "He is a fine old man. I like him" said Alexander. "The Macedonians are somewhat apprehensive ot such liberality. 'At this rate he will give away more than he gets' exclaimed one" said Hephaistion. "That may be so" said Alexander. "I have not come here like a trader to get more than I give. To hard blows I return harder blows. Great generosity I return with greater generosity. As old Taxila says, nobody will care to fight when their water and food are not threatened. What say you, Sasigupta?" "Sire, I am not quite so sure of that" said Sasigupta, "The rulers of Ind come from the Kshatriya caste like me. They are adjured by their religion not to surrender to any other King, and to consider it more honourable to die. And even the philosophers, who eat the pulp of fallen fruits and drink only fresh water and think all day long of God and the purpose of human life, and abhor the idea of taking the life of the meanest living thing,

encourage these rulers to persist in this course of action, saying that it is their way of attaining heaven. So I won't be surprised if some of them resist" "Then, how do you explain the ready submission of Taxila and his son?" asked Alexander. "They are now afraid of an attack by the powerful Poros and the King of Abhisara. If unaided, they are sure to be defeated and made to acknowledge the overlordship of Poros. They naturally prefer the easy overlordship of a more distant and generous King. The professors and philosophers of Taxila are against their submission, and may incite them to change their minds" replied Sasigupta, "Already one of them tried to persuade them not to come and swear allegiance to you, as that might injure India's ancient dharma,[6] but to seek the aid of a great Indian King instead. Taxila and Omphis refused to act by his advice. So he left the city for the court of the other Indian King taking with him his book on Politics and Economics." "Are not the kings of India absolute masters of their kingdoms and policies like the kings of Macedon? Do they allow all these demagogues to dictate their policy?" asked Alexander. "Our system is very different from yours. Our kings are absolute monarchs, but they cannot change the caste or customs of their subjects or the laws of the sages. The philosophers and the Brahmins are the custodians of these laws and wield tremendous influence with the kings and the people. But they are not demagogues or aristocrats. They are in some ways democratic and in some ways aristocratic. They are intensely conservative, and generally succeed in achieving their objects by mere preaching. They are not fighters, but most fighters in our country will listen to them and act as they say." "Well, let them not say, anything against us. Then, they will hang, that is all" said Alexander. "I like

6. Rule of life down by God

philosophers, but they must keep to their sphere and not intermeddle in politics if they prize their safety. But there is no need to consider these problems now. Our army of 120000 infantry and 15000 cavalry will shortly enter India, a larger army than any sent by Darius or Semiramis. We shall also be getting fresh reinforcements from Macedon from time to time. I do not think that either the philosophers or the princes or warriors will dare to challenge our might. Let us go ahead with our plans. Hephaistion, are you and Perdikkas not confident of effecting the objective laid down for you ? " "We are quite confident" said Hephaistion "My only regret is that I shall not be with you in your more arduous campaign." "Oh, don't worry about me ; I have Krateros, and he is equal to me. We shall effect our objective quite easily. What say you, Krateros ?" asked Alexander. "With you nothing is impossible" said Krateros. "Not even the conquest and unification of the whole world ?" asked Alexander. "Not even that" said Krateros. In three days more, both the armies were on the march.

CHAPTER II

THE SON OF SAGES

RAIN was falling one afternoon in the City of Kasi. The narrow streets were getting slushy and slippery. Giant bulls stood blocking the streets and lanes unconcerned at the rain or the passers-by who edged themselves in between them as if they were rocks or posts. Nobody interfered with them, any more than with the rains or the wandering sanyasis[1] of different kinds, for they were Siva's messengers just as the rains were Indra's messengers and the sanyasis were God's messengers.

In a house on the Hanuman Ghat facing the Ganges, Devaki, the mother of Chanakya, was anxiously awaiting the result of a gigantic contest in Vedic recitation and disputation which her son was competing in that day. She was aged forty-five and was dark in complexion, wiry in features, and bristling with energy. With her was her old friend Meenakshi and her grand-daughter Gautami. Meenakshi was 56 years old, was brown in complexion, and had a cheerful smile on her lips. Gautami was just past 11 and was a well-built handsome girl with a light brown complexion. "I wonder how he is faring in this test to-day. It seems to be very keenly contested as it has not ended

1. Hindu monks.

yet. I hear that scholars of repute have come from all over Jambudvipa.[2] The King of Kasi is giving a pair of very costly shawls as the prize besides taking the victor in a triumphal procession round the town to the beating of drums and cymbals" said Meenakshi. "He will come off all right" said Devaki "This is not his first contest. He has all the retentive memory of his father with the subtlety and originality of his paternal grandfather and the uncanny powers of his maternal grandfather. He cut his wisdom teeth at the age of sixteen. At Takshasila he won the title 'Mallanaga' or 'the elephant among the wrestlers' owing to his victories in even the greatest contests. He was also called Pakshilaswami by some because of his prodigious memory as he could remember for a *paksha* or fortnight everything heard once, and by some others because he was the master of hundreds of birds, carrier pigeons and hoopoes, which he employed for carrying secret messages." "So, be careful" said Meenakshi to Gautami. "Any husband is hard to please, and this one ought to be even harder." "She need have no fear" said Devaki. He is most affectionate and considerate. He has never said an unkind word to me yet. The blazing fire of his anger is always reserved for fit objects of his wrath, and is never once directed against the weak and the helpless."

"He has many other names. What do they all mean?" asked Meenakshi. "Vishnugupta, of course, is his own name which he was given after his paternal grandfather. What about the rest?" "He is called Kautalya because of our gotra, the Kutala gotra, though some call him Kautilya or 'the crooked' because of the endless intricacies of his plans and the convolutions of his brain. He has made fun of these uncomplimentary critics

2. In this context, it means India.

by referring to himself often as *Kautilya*, just as Uddhava called himself Vatavyadhi or Narada called himself Pisuna, or Bhishma called himself Kaunapadanta. He is called Vatsyayana after my father's gotra, the Sri Vatsa gotra, as he is the *dwamushyayana*[3] son of my father also. Of course, he is called Dramila or Tamila as we are Tamils from Muchiri like you. He is called Angula or 'one-inch dwarf' because of his short stature. He is referred to as Chanakya after his father." "Well, Gautami, now you have the answer to your question to me the other day" said Meenakshi. Gautami promptly fled into the kitchen.

"She will make an excellent daughter-in-law to you" said Meenakshi. "She is an obedient girl and can cook well. My son likes her cooking" said Devaki. "That is why on this momentous day, I have asked her to cook her special dish, the rice cakes" said Meenakshi. "When this marriage is over, we shall be rid of our burden. Ever since her parents died, we have been bringing her up here. We are growing old, and my husband is suggesting that we should migrate to Suklathirtha that we might spend our last days in that holy place. You know how absolutely indifferent he has become to worldly things." "I know" said Devaki. "Syama Sastri's learning and disinterestedness are both well-known. So too his sense of humour and practical jokes on hypocrites. My husband was never tired of narrating that episode when Syama Sastri deliberately gave away the rich man's best cow as a death-bed gift instead of the half-starved one kept ready for the purpose by his miserly son. The son boiled with suppressed anger but could not do anything as it would bring him into contempt in the eyes of the assembled multitude which sang his praises for such

3. An agreement by the father of a girl that her son shall be treated as his adopted son also, besides being the son of his son-in-law.

a gift." "Why, he did an even more daring thing" said Meenakshi. "One day, when a selfish man wanted to make a cheap sacrifice at Gaya and to gain merit easily by foregoing the *amalak*[4] my husband said '*Am*'[5] instead, and the man repeated it after him unwittingly and made it a real sacrifice. The pilgrim curses my husband whenever he sees a mango! But my husband laughs and says 'Some people have to be secured merit against their will just as some soldiers have to be compelled to fight, and some students to study.' Again, one day, when a rich man offered cheap bazaar ghee for being put into the fire as an oblation to the gods, my husband said 'Gods have sensitive nostrils, and the smell of this ghee will upset them.' The ghee was immediately changed," Devaki laughed.

Gautami now brought two nice rice-cakes on plantain leaves, one for her grand-mother and one for Devaki. "Have you kept enough for your grand-father?" asked Devaki. "He will be hungry when he returns from this contest." "She is sure to have done that. She is his favourite and will never forget him. I am sure she has also kept some for Chanakya" said Meenakshi. Gautami fled into the kitchen once more.

"Are there not such contests at Takshasila?" asked Meenakshi. "There are, but the king of Takshasila has no such orthodox tradition of patronage of Vedic learning behind him as the Kings of Kasi and Magadha. The place is on the borders of Jambudvipa. Medicine and Surgery prosper more than the Vedas there. Foreigners of every description abound there, Yavanas, Nyseans, Bahlikas, Asvakas, Aspasians, Parsikas and others, and they wield great influence. Indeed, the King and the Crown Prince have gone to

4. Gooseberry.

5. Mango.

do homage to a great Yavana chief who has conquered the Persian Empire and is advancing on Takshasila. Chanakya advised them to seek the help of the king of Magadha first as it would be dangerous for Hindu Dharma if they became vassals of this unknown Yavana. They rejected his advice. So he is now on his way to Pataliputra to meet the Nanda king and publish his great book 'Arthasastra' under his auspices just as Panini, Vararuchi and Varsha published their famous books there." "There is some difference between those days and now" whispered Meenakshi. "The present King is mean and does not appreciate learning as much as the previous kings. They say that he and his eight brothers are all indifferent to merit or learning, and simply like to hoard up gold and to hear endless flattery." "Hm!" said Devaki "Perhaps that is why Chanakya said that he would go alone to Pataliputra, leaving me here. His anger blazes forth at all unworthy kings. He has evidently heard something about the present king from his innumerable spies some of whom are from Magadha." "Good Heavens! Does he keep a host of spies, like a king?" asked Meenakshi "And where are they now?" "His spies are everywhere and nowhere. Even I don't know them always. Sometimes, people have mistaken me for one of his spies. He is a man of mystery and terror for his enemies, but is the soul of simplicity and love for his friends. At Takshasila he got such a tremendous reputation for learning and proficiency in the occult arts that hundreds of his fellow students took him as their guru. So, at the age of 24, he is already an Acharya[6] with innumerable disciples. Even the king of Takshasila used to respect and fear 'the black Brahmin' as he was known there owing to his dark southern complexion. Some of his disciples, like Indusarma, Siddharthaka and Nipunaka, are themselves very clever men. Indusarma is a master magician. Chanakya's guru[7] here, the venerable

Ambarisha, was highly pleased with his pupil's achievements at Takshasila. He and his disciples have all gone to witness today's contest. Ambarisha is sure that Chanakya will win." "Siddharthaka is coming. I wonder what news he brings" said Meenakshi.

Siddharthaka, a young man of 21, went to Devaki, saluted her, and said "He has won! He has won! He is being taken in a procession round the town. Come along, all of you. We shall go and watch it near the Dasasvamedh ghat!". "Oh, I am ever so glad" said Devaki. "How many competed?" "Seventy-four. One after another they committed some mistake or other and dropped out. Finally only an old man and our Acharya were left. The old man committed a slip, and our Acharya was declared victor by the assembled committee of pundits. 'He has rolled all the four vedas into one' said the old man 'it is not fair to pit me against him, an old bull against a young elephant. Our Acharya's Acharya shouted in joy at the success of his erstwhile pupil. Now, come quick"

Devaki, Meenakshi and Gautami soon set out with Siddharthaka and reached the Dasasvamedh ghat[8] which was crowded to its utmost capacity. The procession arrived at last. Chanakya was on a gaily caparisoned elephant which was surrounded on all sides and almost hidden from men by an admiring crowd. After an imposing fanfare of trumpets, the king's herald cried out "Here rides the venerable Chanakya, the son of sages, the lamp among the learned, the chief among the debaters, the ocean of knowledge. He who dares to challenge his title, let him come

6. A well-known teacher with his own band of disciples.

7. Precepter; teacher.

8. A famous ghat where ten horse sacrifices are said to have been celebrated.

forward." Nobody stirred. The face of Devaki was radiant with joy. Meenakshi too was very happy. Gautami gazed at her future lord and husband with unmistakable admiration. Chanakya saw them all and bowed to his mother and Meenakshi amidst universal applause. Then the King of Kasi presented the pair of costly shawls, and spoke a few words about the great contest, and the assembly dispersed.

Chanakya went with his shawls to his mother and said "Mother, with your blessings I have won." "Oh, how I wish your father were alive now to see this!" said Devaki and shed a tear. "All of us rejoice over your triumph" said Meenakshi "Now let us go home! Gautami has prepared some nice rice cakes for you." "You go in advance. I shall follow in a few minutes" said Chanakya. They did accordingly. Soon afterwards, Chanakya reached the house with two dozen friends and disciples. Syama Sastri had returned home in advance and received them all with unassumed joy. "It was the greatest contest ever held in Kasi for the last thirty years" he told every one proudly. "Now bring the cakes, mother" said Chanakya "Our friends require something more substantial than Vedic disputations." Devaki and Meenakshi looked embarassed as they had not counted for so many guests and thought that Gautami would have prepared only a few cakes for Chanakya and Syama Sastri. But their surprise was great when Gautami took a huge pile of rice cakes, more than sufficient for all the visitors. When Chanakya and his friends and disciples were eating them with relish, Meenakshi and Devaki joined Gautami in the kitchen and asked her "How did you foresee that he would bring so many friends, and prepare so many cakes in anticipation?" "Don't I know that much about the ways of the Aryaputra[9]?" asked Gautami. "Did he

9. A term used by a Hindu wife to denote her husband whom she cannot name by custom.

not tell us the other day 'We must share our joys and good things with others. We must suffer our sorrows and calamities by ourselves.' So, naturally, I expected the Aryaputra to win and bring his friends and disciples, and prepared for it.". "You are indeed the wife for him, my dear" said Devaki, embracing her. Meanwhile, Syama Sastri told the friends of Chanakya "He is to marry Gautami on the next Pushyanakshatra day. You must all bless the occasion with your presence." "We will" cried out one and all "Pushyanakshatra[10] day in the month of Pushya is a very auspicious occasion for a marriage. Mind you," said they to Chanakya. "We shall trouble you and your wife for such cakes whenever we come to your house." "You shall have them so long as I have a grain of rice in my humble abode" said Chanakya. "That means," said Siddharthaka, "so long as there is a grain of rice in all Jambudvipa."

10. Aldebaran.

CHAPTER III

THE MOMENTOUS MEETING

IT was nine o'clock one morning in July 327 B C. The city of Pataliputra was rousing itself to its usual hectic and varied activity despite the fast-mounting sun and the steadily increasing heat. All its sixty-four gates were open, and the five hundred and seventy towers on the city walls were guarded by the sentries on duty. Innumerable bullock carts were coming into the Imperial city laden with all kinds of articles of luxury and necessity. Frankincense, corals, pearls and rhinoceros teeth from Arabia and the Persian Gulf coming through Bharukacha, Sopara and Ujjaini; rubies and sapphires from Simhala and Kerala; diamonds from Kalinga, Kosala, Vidarbha, Vajrakarur and the Vedotkata mountain; beryls from the Satyaputra country[1]; the finest pearls and cotton fabrics from the Pandya country; silks from Tibet, Kashmir and Benares; gold from Sind, Suvarnagiri and Darada[2] country; rock-salt from the Salt Range; sea-salt from Tamralipti; sandalwood from Kamarupa and Mahishamandala[3]; crocodile and tiger skins from Vanga[4] and

1. Mangalore and Satyamangalam country.
2. Near Gilgit.
3. Assam and Mysore.
4. Bengal.

Kamarupa; bear skins and panther skins from the Himalayas and the Vindhyas; skins of sea animals from Saurashtra; blankets from Nepal, Vanga and the Pandya country; and all kinds of cereals, butter, oil, pepper, cumin, ginger, cinnamon, cassia, cardamom, coriander, cloves, fish, charcoal, firewood, straw, weapons, mud pots, iron articles, vegetables, flowers, and plantain leaves were being brought in by the patient bullocks, the main carriers of India through the ages. Inland customs officers were closely scrutinising the goods and levying the royal and municipal dues and affixing the red seals in token of payment. They were also demanding to see the passports of foreigners, wild tribes and suspicious looking strangers, as they crossed one of the four bridges across the vast moats, six hundred feet broad and forty-five feet deep, surrounding the city throughout its length of nine miles and breadth of two miles and approached one of the gates set among the high wooden palisades and ramparts. The moats were filled with water from the lake formed in the Hiranyavaha or Sona river by a dam. They extended even to the southern side beteen the Sona and the walled city.

Thousands of citizens were bathing in the Sona. Thousands more were returning in chariots and bullock carts after a bath in the sacred Ganges a few miles to the north-east of the city. Many were bathing also in the Ganges canal just north of the city. An aqueduct was carrying the Ganges water over the moat from this canal to the Gangasagar, a vast sheet of crystal water outside the Suganga palace. Thousands were bathing in that tank also. On the banks of the tank were temples dedicated to Siva, Indra, Kubera and the Asvins. There was also a temple of the Goddess Kumari and another of the Goddess Madira.

The palace had extensive pleasure grounds and gardens abounding in all kinds of flowers, fruit trees and ornamental

trees. Trees full of Pàtali or trumpet flowers, from which Pataliputra got its name, were planted in these grounds which contained besides other trees with sweet-smelling flowers of other kinds and in such abundance that the town itself was called alternatively Kusumapura or the city of flowers. Inside the palace grounds there were several pools filled with water from the Ganges, one exclusively for the king and his queens, one for the princes, one for the ladies of the royal family, one for the ladies in waiting, and one for the officers of the royal household. The palace building itself was a masterpiece of the Hindu architecture of those days. Though built entirely of wood, it was of surpassing splendour and magnificence. It stood in the centre of extensive gardens, and had three stories, and vast halls with gilded pillars adorned with golden vines and silver birds. The royal rooms and the audience chambers were luxuriously fitted. Basins and goblets of gold, some measuring six feet in width, richly carved tables and chairs of state made of teak, ebony and rosewood, and covered over with gold and silver embroidered cloth, the most exquisitely made copper and brass articles, huge vessels of glazed and ornamental pottery filled with cool water, the most delicate pieces of ivory carving, and huge brass and crystal mirrors with polished surfaces decked those rooms. Even the ordinary rooms had an appearance of luxury and wealth befitting such a great ruler's palace. The palace with the gardens occupied a vast square and had four main entrances. Six horsemen and twelve infantrymen stood guard at each of the entrances and were changed every three hours. Several more were guarding the inner apartments, the ladies' enclosure, the magazine and the treasury. Men and women servants were constantly moving in and out on various errands.

In a detached building adjoining the palace was the grand banqueting hall where brisk arrangements were in progress for the breakfast of a thousand Brahmins in the presence of the King and the royal princes. That being New Moon Day, the banquet was to be on a grander scale than on ordinary days. The King and the princes were expected to arrive there at 10 o'clock. So there was great bustle. Though the Superintendent was on leave, owing to a ceremony in his house, he had stepped in for a few minutes to see that every arrangement was made properly, for he loved to see all things done well. He now emerged out of the hall, and the sentries saluted him respectfully, and yet affectionately. For they loved Prince Chandragupta who was a highly popular captain in the army and was the grandson of their late commander-in-chief Maurya whose memory they cherished.

Chandragupta returned their salute and went through the spacious palace gardens towards the northwestern corner of the palace enclosure where his own quarters were located. He was of medium height, well-built and muscular, and looked every inch a soldier, though he was only in his nineteenth year then. His face was outwardly cheerful, smiling and captivating, but a close observation revealed an inward seriousness and sadness. His chin indicated grim determination and an iron will. He wore a fine muslin cloth of the famous Gangetic brand. It was tucked up at his waist and came half way down to his ankles. He had also a silk coat fastened at the front with tassels, a gold-laced upper cloth over his shoulders and a laced turban. Half way through the gardens, he reached a neglected part overgrown with thorns and brambles on either side of the path. A kind of deeprooted grass had also spread over portions of the pathway. He found a man sitting on the

path a few feet away assiduously uprooting some of the invading grass.

The stranger arrested his attention at once. He was about 25 years old, short in stature, and very dark in complexion, indicating his southern origin. He wore a holy thread and castemark showing him to be a Sama Veda Srotriya Brahmin[5], and was evidently on his way to the banqueting hall to take part in the feast after having had already a bath in the Ganges. He had by his side a small copper vessel and tumbler, and a cloth bundle. Why was this Brahmin digging that grass with all his might and main like a gardener till the last root had been pulled out? Chandragupta's curiosity was roused by this unusual sight. So he stopped where he was and watched.

The stranger gathered up all the dry grass he had dug up, opened his cloth bundle, took from it a flint, steel and cotton wool, made a fire, set fire to the dry grass, poured out some water from the copper vessel into the small tumbler, dissolved the ashes of the burnt grass in it, and drank the solution with great relish and satisfaction. Then he washed the tumbler, replaced it in the copper vessel, and put back the flint and steel in the cloth bundle. So absorbed was he in this work all the time that he had not taken the slightest notice of Chandragupta, though he must have seen him.

Wonderstruck, Chandragupta approached him, saluted him reverently, and said " Excuse me for my having looked on so intently. I am not well versed in these matters, and was wondering what mighty herb it was that you were so diligently digging up for your morning draught." " It was no herb. It was just ordinary grass, the variety that

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5. A high caste Brahmin following the third Veda.

spreads and trips down unwary pedestrians. It caught my feet today and made me fall down. It made a fool of me. But, now, you see what has happened. For the momentary humiliation it was able to inflict on me it has been destroyed, root and branch. So will all Chanakya's enemies perish!" said the stranger.

Chandragupta was astounded. So, this was the man mentioned by his grandfather Maurya with bated breath as a man of mystery and terror, as the one person on earth who could escape from any trap unaided, as a renowned scholar and magician, as an expert in politics and economics, as a person who at the age of twenty had beaten all the learned men of Takshasila in discussions on all possible topics, and as a man of the most blazing anger, and that not always for weighty reasons, but one capable of keeping cool when intent on achieving even his resolutions taken hastily in anger. His grandfather had ordered him never to make this man his enemy, whatever the provocation, but to try to make him his friend at all costs. His joy at this providential meeting was great. Still, he doubted whether his grandfather was right. His grandfather had walkedi nto a trap of the Nandas whom he knew for years, and had made the greatest mistake of his life. Was he likely to have formed a better judgement about this man whom he did not know and had merely heard of? He resolved to test for himself before seeking the co-operation and help of this stranger who seemed at first sight to be a kind of lunatic. So he said to Chanakya "Reverend Sir, does an inanimate thing like that grass deserve to be punished?" "Of course, though I should prefer not to use the term *punishment*. I should rather say that such things have to be set right. Indeed, this comes under my heading 'removal of thorns.' Don't we bite off the point of a thorn which pierces our foot?

We owe a duty to the public to destory such noxious things. In addition, I have got a private benefit also by this action. The anger which welled up in me at my fall has now ceased after this act of retaliation. So a double purpose has been served by this simple act." "Yes" said Chandragupta reassured "There is some truth in that. But you said just now that all your enemies should perish like this. That seems to me to be an extravagant statement. What will happen, for instance, if some powerful king were to insult your reverence?" "The very same thing that you saw me do now" said Chanakya coolly. "Evidently you people in this town, which I am visiting for the first time now, have not heard of my prowess or resources. What can a king do to me? Elephants, cavalry, chariots, and infantry are nothing to me. My intellect can easily get the better of all these. Nothing is impossible for me. Don't look incredulous like that. I am so confident because I never do anything which is opposed to Dharma[6]. He who upholds Dharma is upheld by it. He who destroys it is destroyed by it." "But will Dharma be able to assert itself in this iron age[7]?" "Certainly. It will assert itself in any age. The fools who complain of the powerlessness of Dharma in this age do not know what Dharma is; they complain only because their pet schemes and plots, which they confuse with Dharma, fail."

He said all this with such an air of conviction and sincerity that Chandragupta was convinced that he was no humbug. Bowing to him, he said "Reverend Sir, we in this town are not altogether strangers to your fame. Your recent resounding victory at Benares has made all the Pundits here afraid of you. Your extraordinary learning and occult

6. Righteousness.

7. The Hindus consider this to be the Kali or Iron Age.

powers are a subject of constant wonder and awe even here. Be we do not know enough about your reverence. Which part of Jumbudvipa is honoured by your birth, Sir?". "I am from Muyirikkodu[8] or Muchiri in the Keralaputra country." "Are you coming from there now?". "Oh, no, I am now coming from Takshasila. It is twelve years since I left the Kerala country. I was only thirteen years old then. My father, mother and I went from Kerala to Benares. I studied the Vedas and Upanishads under a celebrated teacher in Benares for six years, and, later on, went to Takshasila where I learnt medicine, politics, the military science and economics for another six years. I have begun a monumental work on economics and politics called Arthasastra. It is half finished. As the Nandas are reputed to be great patrons of learning, I have come here to show them my learning." "Have you shown it to the king of Takshasila, Sir?" "No. It is a book meant for the guidance of great kings who are never likely to use the many secret and dangerous contrivances described there against the four castes or our ancient Dharma. The King of Takshasila has gone to swear allegiance to a Yavana Chieftain called Alikasundara or Alexander, disregarding my advice. Like Panini and Vararuchi I want to show my learning in the famous city of Pataliputra in the court of this great and powerful monarch, surrounded by thousands of learned men, rather than in the court of the king of Takshasila. For a writer on Politics and Economics this is even more important than for a writer of grammar like Panini." "You must have crossed the ocean of learning, judging by popular repute" said Chandragupta. "Pooh!" said Chanakya "People who have not seen the Ganges and see a man carrying a vessel of Ganges water, like me, are

8. Muziris or Cranganore.

struck by the large quantity. Only those who have seen the Ganges, like you and me, will realise the utter insignificance of the quantity in the vessel. The ocean of knowledge can never be wholly crossed. The man who pretends to have done it has only crossed some miserable brook which falls into the ocean and has mistaken it for the ocean in his ignorance and incompetence, like an ant mistaking a tank for an ocean." "You are very modest" said Chandragupta. "Modest!" said Chanakya. "I am only speaking the truth. Truth must be spoken even against oneself. Of course, it can be spoken even when it is in favour of oneself. That is why I said that I am a match for any king on earth who deviates from Dharma and insults me. Take it from me, the intellect of Chanakya is competent to meet all situations. No army yet seen on earth will avail against it. Now, tell me where this banqueting hall is and whether the vrishala[9] who allots the seats is there. I am told that he is a bright young man with the rarest gifts and is an adept at discerning learning and merit." "I am that Vrishala, and that block of buildings over there is the banqueting hall" said Chandragupta blushing. Chanakya stood shamefaced. "I apologise for the unintentional insult" said he "I never meant to offend you. This wretched habit of ours of labelling people by their caste is responsible for it. I ought to have guessed who you were on seeing your noble appearance, but did not. You can prescribe any punishment you like for my offence. Let it not be said that Chanakya punished only others." "Call me Vrishala always" said Chandragupta, impressed by the other's sincerity and contrition. "There is nothing more agreeable to one than

9. Here, it means a Kshatriya who had abandoned the orthodox caste customs owing to the conversion of his family at one time to Buddhism and was therefore regarded as a Sudra by the orthodox masses, though he himself had now become a Hindu.

that the great ones of the earth should call one by a familiar epithet." " You are as intelligent and noble as I heard it said of you " said Chanakya " Ask of me anything more you like." " I request you to be ever my friend and wellwisher, and never to be estranged from me whatever I chance to do in my ignorance. That is what my grandfather, the great Maurya, desired of me with his dying breath " said Chandragupta, convinced that Chanakya was really a great man. " I shall be honoured by your friendship " said Chanakya " Never can a Brahmin do without a Kshatriya, or a Kshatriya without a Brahmin. And Maurya's grandson must certainly be a Kshatriya. I have heard the most extraordinary accounts of Maurya's life and last moments. You must tell me the authentic story some time. Now I must be going to the banqueting hall. Will you be coming there soon ?" " No. I am on leave today in connection with the annual ceremony of my mother's death. But the Manager will be in charge. Do come after the feast is over, and take some rest in my humble house near by. There, that is the building. If you like, I shall then tell you about Maurya and his end." " Capital " said Chanakya, " Nothing will please me better. Leave a man at the gate of the banqueting hall to guide me to your house after the banquet." " I shall do so " said Chandragupta, and left for his house, while Chanakya walked briskly towards the banqueting hall.

As soon as he reached his house, Chandragupta called his expert spy, Bhagirathi, told him about Chanakya's arrival in the city and asked him to watch outside the banqueting hall unostentatiously and to lead Chanakya, whom he described to him, to his house when he came out. " He will, I am afraid, land himself in some trouble there " said he to Bhagirathi, " He is too great a believer in Dharma for this iron age. Anyway, his experience today will be a test of his doctrine that Dharma triumphs even in this age. Go now, and keep your eyes and ears open."

CHAPTER IV

CHANAKYA'S VOW

CHANAKYA entered the spacious banqueting hall. He saw ten gold plates and a thousand silver plates before most of which the learned Brahmins had already sat. The Manager in charge told him, in answer to his question, that the nine gold plates were for the eight Nanda brothers and their uncle Sarvarthasiddhi, that the tenth gold plate was for the most learned Brahmin of the day, while the silver plates were for the other learned Brahmins and ministers and guests, and asked him if he had the necessary permit for one of the silver plates. "I am Chanakya acknowledged to be the most learned Brahmin alive by the pundits of Benares and Takshasila. So I am entitled to sit before the tenth gold plate" said Chanakya. At the mention of his name there was a general stir. All eyes were turned on the man whose recent triumph at Benares was known to every one and whose fame for learning had become legendary. "Reverend Sir" said the Manager "All of us have heard of your tremendous learning. But this seat is reserved. The Rajaguru[1], the venerable Subandhu, sits there daily." "How can that be allowed? How can one

1. The King's chaplain and preceptor.

man be the most learned Brahmin every day? Besides, I hear that he is not so very learned" said Chanakya. All the assembled Brahmins laughed, as Subandhu's pretence to learning was the object of many a joke at these feasts.

Chanakya soon entered into conversation with them and delighted them by talking on different topics with equal ease and authority. The leading Brahmins said to the Manager, "Fame has not exaggerated his prowess. He is assuredly the most learned Brahmin we have ever seen." Chanakya then went and sat before the tenth gold plate, saying "This parishad[2] has elected me to this seat." The dismayed Manager said to him "Reverend Sir, it is not safe for you to sit there." "Why not? I shall not move from here till a more learned man ousts me" said Chanakya.

The Nandas arrived at that very moment, accompanied by Rakshasa, Nakranasa, Sakatala and other ministers. Chanakya rose from his seat to honour them. They and Subandhu stared at this poverty-stricken, dark, southern Brahmin clad in a coarse home-spun loin cloth and upper cloth presuming to occupy the tenth gold plate. "I say" said Subandhu at last, breaking into a laugh, "Do you know for whom that tenth gold plate is?" "Yes, it is for the most learned Brahmin of the day" said Chanakya, "and I am he. I am Chanakya, acknowledged to be the most learned Brahmin alive by the pundits of Benares and Takshasila." Subandhu shrank back like one stung. He did not dream of entering into any learned discussion with this far-famed scholar. "Ha! Ha! I like it" said Sukalpa "Is this some joke staged by you, Dhana?" he asked turning to his youngest brother. "No, brother, I don't stage jokes at the expense of our palace priest" said Dhanananda. "Then it is something serious" said Sukalpa

2. An assembly of learned men.

" Ask the man to move from the gold plate." " My good man, rise up " said Dhanananda. " I am the most learned Brahmin here, oh king, and, under your own rules, I am the person entitled to sit here " said Chanakya to Sukalpa, ignoring Dhanananda. " Are not my orders enough for you ?" asked Dhanananda. " No, the king alone should pass orders " said Chanakya. " We have decided that Subandhu is to occupy that seat. So, go and sit before a silver plate at once " said Sukalpa. " How could you arrive at a decision without hearing me or testing our respective merits ? Kings are to do justice according to the sacred laws and the evidence of the case. Let us have a contest in learning, and let these learned men here act as experts and give their opinion. Then, oh, king, give your decision, and I shall obey it " said Chanakya. " Your very name Sukalpa shows that you should decide things only according to Dharma." " Dare you dictate to us, young man ? " asked Sukalpa angrily. " A king should listen to wisdom even from a child " said Chanakya, " Subandhu cannot occupy this seat as the most learned Brahmin till he is proved to be such. Let the seat be declared to be one for the palace priest, or for Subandhu, and I shall gladly vacate it forthwith and go to a silver plate. But so long as it is for the most learned Brahmin, I must refuse to leave this seat without proper proof of his superiority in learning."

Sukalpa become furious. " Look here, you fool. I don't want to be harsh on you as you appear to be a stranger from the south not well acquainted with our usages and customs. Move yourself at once to a silver plate, lest you be thrust out of the hall altogether " said he. " Are there no ministers here ? " asked Chanakya. " Can't they advise their king as to the proper course ? " " We have the best ministers on earth, but they will not dare to go against our

wishes. This is not a country where ministers rule kings but where they carry out the king's orders" said Sukalpa with a significant look at Nakranasa and Sakatala. "Let Subandhu argue with me on the Vedas or Sastras or or politics or economics or any other matter, and I shall soon vanquish him as I have vanquished many a greater man in Takshasila and Benares" said Chanakya. "My dear man, go to Takshasila and Benares and vanquish more men. Now, get out of this place for good" said Sukalpa. "The kings of Magadha are reputed to be great patrons of learning and upholders of our Aryan Dharma. So I have a right to expect better treatment at your hands, oh king, I am not only the most learned Brahmin present here to-day but am also a great authority on politics[3] and will not be intimidated. I cannot abdicate my duty of defying the unjust orders of kings" said Chanakya. "Drag him by his tuft and throw him out of here" roared Sukalpa "Are there none here who will do this at once?" A dozen armed men went at once to eject Chanakya by violence.

Then the prime minister Subuddhisarman, popularly known as Rakshasa for his superhuman energy and industry, intervened and asked them to keep quiet. He went to Chanakya and said "I am a Brahmin like you. I hate to see a renowned Brahmin scholar ejected from the banqueting hall of this great king like a common thief or marauder. Please go and sit before a silver plate as I do and as the ministers Nakranasa and Sakatala have done. Surely, you don't expect to be honoured more than the prime minister?" "Subuddhisarman" said Chanakya, "It is not arrogance or vanity or a desire for luxury that makes me insist on sitting here. I eat out of a plantain leaf at home. I have eaten even out of earthen plates on some

3. He is the author of the Arthasastra.

occasions. Because this seat is reserved for the most learned Brahmin of the day, I am claiming it. It is wrong on the King's part to allow a man like Subandhu, whose title to be the most learned Brahmin present will not be admitted by anybody, to sit here." "A King's orders must be obeyed even if they are wrong. For, is not a king the representative of God on earth?" asked Rakshasa. "Subuddhisarman, I admire your loyalty to your king. But Brahmanas and Sramanas[4] have a higher duty than nodding assent to all that a king does. We have to disobey unjust commands even if they come from the king. Only the common people have to obey them unquestioningly as they are not yet fit for disobeying them discriminatingly" said Chanakya. "If we disobey the king's orders, we become traitors and have to be punished" said Subuddhisarman. "No, because our object is to secure the king's own good and the good of his subjects. We covet not his kingdom, as we can never become kings. We only want him to act justly. Even in Janaka's court a woman, Gargi, was allowed to challenge the great Yagnavalkya's claim to be the most learned Brahmin. How can I be denied the right to challenge the claim of this man who has not yet opened his mouth to utter one word of learning?" said Chanakya. The assembled Brahmins laughed again.

Sukalpa said to Subuddhisarman "There is no use talking to him. Force is the only thing he understands. Drag him out by his ridiculous tuft. Such monkeys and thieves have no place here." "Monkey or thief, is there anybody among the Brahmins here equal to me in learning? If there is, I shall vacate this seat. Not for any other reason shall I vacate it. Not for your angry words or threats shall I budge. We Brahmins have to protect learning

4. Monks and ascetics of various kinds.

and the scriptures even from kings. So, let anybody learned in the Vedas or Sastras come and oust me from this seat, and not men armed only with swords and sticks. I refuse to be unseated for the mere caprice of a king" said Chanakya. "Look at Subandhu. He is tall and fair and has got goodly clothes on. You are black like a monkey, and have got mean clothes on" said Dhanananda. "Sir" said Chanakya "Scholars are esteemed for what is in them and not for what is on them." "It is difficult for rich men to realise this." Again, there was laughter among the Brahmins. "Enough of this wrangling. Push the fellow out" said Sukalpa. Then Chanakya was caught hold of by a dozen men. One caught him by the tuft, and three shoved him from behind, inflicting some blows on him. Chanakya fell down in front of the assembly with his tuft dangling confusedly and his clothes all disarranged. Subandhu then went and sat by the gold plate in high glee. The assembled Brahmins kept an ominous silence.

Chanakya rose in terrible anger and said to the Nandas "You have this day heaped the grossest insults on the greatest Brahmin alive and dragged the scriptures into the mire in the pride of your power, oh princes. I shall quickly rescue the scriptures and the world from you, oh mean Kshatriyas. A far better man shall be crowned king of Magadha before I tie up this tuft made to dangle by your insolent men. You don't know the power of Chanakya. Hundreds here know that my cause is just, but they keep quiet because of their unmanly fear of your tyrannical might. They will all rejoice when I come back and uproot you." "Catch the wretch and put him to death" said Sukalpa. Several men were about to run after Chanakya with sticks and swords when there were protests from the assembled Brahmins. Subuddhisarman sensed the feeling of the Brahmins and rose and said "Sire, this is an

act which will ill befit your dignity. Shall the sons of Mahapadma, who conquered the earth like a second Bhargava, fear the idle threats of a demented Brahmin scholar impotent to do anything? Am I not here to counter anything this man can do? Shall we, who feed a thousand Brahmins every day and sixty thousand Brahmins on the king's birthday, stain our hands with Brahmin blood, however unworthy the Brahmin may be? Shall we give our subjects cause to accuse us of slaying an unarmed Brahmin? We are strong enough to treat this braggart's words with contempt. We, who curbed the lordly Maurya and his hundred lieutenants, shall we confess to fear of this black Brahmin from the south? Take not the least notice of him. Let him go where he likes and do what he likes and realise that his anger with such mighty kings will only make him burst in impotence like a mustard seed getting angry with its frying pan" Sukalpa laughed and said "You are always level-headed, Subuddhisarman. Let us forget him and remember our breakfast which is getting cold." Then the party began the feasting, completely ignoring Chanakya.

Chanakya went out in a raging fury. Nobody except Bhagirathi took the least notice of him. Bhagirathi watched the incident with wonder and dismay, and marvelled at the foresight of Chandragupta. He made a secret sign to Chanakya and proceeded towards his master's house. Chanakya followed him at a distance, and, unnoticed by anybody, went into Chandragupta's house.

Chandragupta took Chanakya into his private room and expressed his great sorrow at the gross insult meted out to him. "I was afraid that Dharma would not triumph in this age" said he. "Have no fear" said Chanakya. "It will triumph all right. Rejoice, for I nave resolved to make you king of Magadha and to be your prime minister till you are

firmly established on the throne. They know not my power, these fools!" "But, was it wise to take such risks? Your escape was more or less due to Rakshasa's interference. Should a wise man depend on unforeseen acts for his safety?" "No" said Chanakya "I admit that I might appear to have somewhat miscalculated the situation. But I had not really done so. I knew that I would not be killed in that assembly of Brahmins. No Hindu King will risk that. If not Rakshasa, some other person who had heard about my fame would have interfered. I shall soon have my revenge, I shall uproot them as I did that piece of grass. I shall go to work at once., Listen. I have a very large number of spies of all kinds. I shall keep in touch with you through them. They will meet you at all kinds of places and times and in all conceivable disguises. I see that you too keep many spies. I have three watchwords which my spies use. The first is 'I bow to all ascetics.' The second is 'I bow to all serpents and goddesses.' The third is 'I bow to the god Brahmâ and to Kusadhwaja.' Be thoroughly satisfied about the *bona fides* of the spies before confiding anything to them. In case of doubt, do not pay any heed to them, till they utter 'Oblation to the Moon.' You had also better adopt the same watchwords. Whatever you tell spies, till you know them to be thoroughly reliable, should have an apparent everyday meaning, besides the inner and concealed meaning intended to be conveyed, so that even if they are frauds they will not profit in any way or get any damning evidence against you." "It is a great and perilous enterprise you have taken in hand" said Chandragupta. "Yes, but not so perilous as some may think. A king who has abandoned Dharma is already on the way to ruin. Have no fear" said Chanakya. "Fear and I are strangers" said Chandragupta. "I was only thinking of you." "I am not surprised to hear that" said Chanakya, "I had seen in you

the thirty-two signs of a Mahapurusha[5]. You are certainly born to be a king. I was not mistaken in you. A King without courage and a Brahmin without learning, both are despicable."

"I have a favour to ask" said Chandragupta. "I beg of you to deign to be my *guru*[6]." "The honour is mine" said Chanakya. "Any *guru* will be proud to have such a disciple. My *upadesam*[7] to you is this 'Protect Brahmins and cows. Let all castes thrive in their respective duties'." "I shall do so" replied Chandragupta. "Remember this" said Chanakya. "Nobody should know about our resolution regarding the Nandas till the proper time comes. Courage is as much required to conceal a thing as to flaunt it about. In other words, a brave man should be bold enough to risk people's mistaking him for a coward when it suits him. That is politics. Rash courage is of no more use to a king than sarasaparilla which, swallowed raw, makes a man sick instead of improving his health." Chandragupta said "Has not my conduct proved it? Do I not appear to be a loyal subject of the Nandas? So, I shall carry out your directions implicitly."

Then he went out for a minute, returned and said to Chanakya "Sir, it is unsafe for you to remain in this city. These mean men, who have listened to Subuddhisarman's advice, may soon change their minds and send their armed men against you. So it is better that you go to some distant place at once. A fast chariot with two excellent horses, belonging to a friend known for his frequent journeys, is ready outside in charge of a most trustworthy servant. I have also placed in it ten bags of gold coins for your expenses in carrying

5. Great man.
6. Spiritual guide.
7. The injunction by a *guru* on initiation.

out our plans. You need not worry about funds. My grandfather has left enough for me and he has urged me to use it for accomplishing his dying wish, namely, to extirpate the entire race of these usurping Nandas." "You are far-sighted and are sure to succeed" said Chanakya. "Tell me, have you already got any promise of help?" "I have explored the possibilities of getting reliable allies ever since my grandfather's death. The King of Kalinga, anxious to shake off the yoke of Magadha imposed on him by Maurya, has promised to help me with fifty thousand troops if I could get together an army of two hundred thousand myself." "That is something" said Chanakya. "But it is a case of helping when the help is not so much needed. Any other promise of help?" "A Savara chieftain, Vairantya, and a Khond chieftain, Khondoveera, have promised to follow me with 5000 Savaras and Khonds in gratitude for my grandfather's compelling the Kalinga King to recognise the internal independence of the Savaras and Khonds." "Ten thousand members of these hill tribes will be nothing at all in a fight with the Nandas. Still, they will come in handy when the need comes. These hill tribes are very trustworthy unlike the men of the plains. I shall now go to Vardhamanapura[8] and think out plans for achieving our objects. It will take some years before we can uproot the Nandas, but uproot them we shall. Ask the chariot to take me to Vardhamanapura." Chandragupta went out and gave instructions to the charioteer accordingly. Then Chanakya took his breakfast and got into the chariot which rattled away in the direction of Vardhamanapura.

8. Modern Burdwan.

CHAPTER V

JEEVASIDDHI'S WILES

ON the evening of the same day, Subuddhisarman and Dhanananda had a talk about Chanakya. " I do not congratulate myself on this incident " said Subuddhisarman. " The sympathy of the assembled Brahmins was with Chanakya. His fame as a scholar is unequalled. He seems to have impressed them as the greatest scholar they have ever seen. They told me that he explained to them how to conquer a kingdom, how to keep it contented, how to administer it, how to sow dissensions, and how to lead an army. He struck them as one knowing everything that is known regarding men, minerals, manufactures, gems, animals, places and things, in short as an encyclopaedic genius. What is more, he seemed to be as deep in the Vedas and the spiritual science as in things of worldly import. Beyond all he was a fanatical advocate of the most ascetic mode of life for himself. He seems to have shown also a complete knowledge of Atharva Veda and black-magic thus bearing out his reputation in this respect. They said that his only fault was an overweening arrogance, but added that in him they felt that the claims were justified by a corresponding ability to realise them." " They are not fools enough

to believe that he could do anything to us?" asked Dhanananda. The minister replied "I am afraid that many of them have taken his threat as not altogether an empty boast." "Do you think he will be foolish enough to try to realise his boast?" asked Dhanananda. "I think he will try to realise it. The man is reputed to be a past master in black-magic. He is also an adept in Yoga. These Yogis[1] fear nothing and have an astonishing reserve of energy. I must now be on the look-out for a competent person to counter his machinations" replied Rakshasa. "Do you believe that there are any secret arts known to black-magic by which people can destroy others?" asked the prince. "Yes. All arts of destruction are secret till they are revealed, and, when they are revealed, others still more deadly are discovered and kept secret. Take the case of the Sataghni[2] and the many kinds of poison gas said to cause instantaneous death or blindness or diseases like those of the lungs, cholera etc. Who can disbelieve in their existence with safety?" said Rakshasa. "I see. Yes, you had better find out one competent to undo the harm likely to be done by Chanakya. Perhaps it might have been as well had we allowed the man to sit before the gold plate for a day. From what I hear he seems to have been an adept at increasing the king's revenues. I have been able to amass in our treasury so far only eight hundred million gold panas[3] even by levying taxes on skins, gums, trees, and stones. He might have been able to increase it ten-fold. Increasing the king's wealth is not one of Subandhu's virtues, his

1. Philosophers who seek union with God and do all acts without attachment, dedicating them to God.

2. A hideous pillar-like weapon with innumerable spikes hurled on the enemy by a machine from the walls of a fort.

3. Each gold pana was worth about seven rupees eight annas. A silver pana was equal to twelve annas.

only activity being to deplete the treasury as much as he can by useless ceremonies. I wonder whether we cannot yet induce Chanakya to return and be our man" said Dhanananda. "It is too late now. We have made him our enemy for life. He is not the kind of man who can be won over. He seems to me to be one of those men arrogant and poor, yet free from love of gold or money. So, we shall have to fight him to the bitter end and counter all his plans. I have already sent my trusted spies to get me the most efficient occultist and black-magic man alive" replied Rakshasa. "You are far-seeing" said Dhanananda. "So long as you are here, what need is there for the Nandas to worry about anything? I wonder if the man you secure will be able to turn base metals into gold." "If he can do that, why should he serve the demons or us?" asked Rakshasa. "That argument will apply to all such persons. Yet, tales have been narrated by credible persons of such people working for kings and others" said the prince. "I am more concerned with countering the effects of Chanakya's black-magic than with finding a man able to turn base metals into gold" said Rakshasa. "Go ahead" said Dhanananda. Then they parted.

Chanakya reached Vardhamanapura safely. He stopped the chariot at the outskirts of the town and went to the house of a rich merchant, followed by Chandragupta's man carrying the ten bags of gold. Then he sent away the man and had his bath and meal. As the sun was about to set, he went to the house of his trusted friend and classmate Indusarman, a profound student of medicine, sorcery, astrology and psychology, and told him of the incidents at the banqueting hall and his vow, and all about Chandragupta. He then asked him to go to Pataliputra as a fanatical Buddhist monk and to earn the implicit confidence of

Subuddhisarman and the Nandas by trick, astrology and black-magic and do all things necessary to bring the Nandas to ruin, promising at the same time to give him suitable directions from time to time. " You can take Chandragupta into your confidence at once, but must meet him only secretly. You can gather intimate facts about the past lives of the Nandas from him and pretend to have discovered them by means of your astrological skill. You can administer secret drugs in milk, water and food and induce ailments and palm them off on me, and then cure them by administering antidotes while pretending to effect the results by incantation. Abuse the Brahmins to your heart's content and give it out as your life's mission to expose their fraud. Refuse all kinds of gifts from the Nandas. Whatever money you want will always be supplied to you."

Indusarman was wild with joy. " My dull and lonely life will hereafter become interesting " said he. " Nobody working under your directions can ever fail. I shall start even tomorrow with medicine and magic box complete, in the disguise of a Buddhist monk. Jeevasiddhi shall be my assumed name, and I shall abuse you and the Brahmins in unmeasured language. In a week I shall be the trusted counsellor of Rakshasa and the Nandas, and your opponent." Chanakya embraced him, gave him a bag of gold for his expenses, and discussed plans with him late into the night.

A fortnight after Chanakya's taking of the vow, all Pataliputra was agog with the news of Jeevasiddhi, a most wonderful doctor, astrologer, sorcerer, black arts man and occultist, and yet a man of simple habits who had consented to serve the Nandas free in order to counter the wiles of Chanakya whom he denounced as the Brahmin arch—scoundrel and pretender whom he, a pious Buddhist monk, was determined to frustrate and expose. The Nandas and

Rakshasa were captivated by him from the very outset. He had, in a secret consultation with Chandragupta, ascertained intimate personal details about them and the other members of their family, and had given them out as if he discovered them by means of his astrological skill. Maurya had told Chandragupta in secret, just before his death, the story of how Mahapadma secretly killed and buried under the flooring of an inner room of the palace an influential Brahmin, the son of the minister Sakatala who, without the knowledge of his father or any other body, had dared to go to Mahapadma's private room alone and condemn his usurpation of the kingdom and his murder of the king and the princes. Even the Nandas and Rakshasa did not know about this closely guarded secret which was known only to Mahapadma and Maurya. They too believed, like the rest, that Sakatala's son had run away to the Himalayas and become a Sannyasi. Sakatala too believed in this report. Jeevasiddhi got this secret information from Chandragupta and was jubilant. "This is the very thing I want for impressing the Nandas and Rakshasa" he said.

The third day after his talk with Chandragupta, he went round the palace with the Nandas, saying "I feel an occult force working against us here. Something here is helping that wretch Chanakya. Let me see. Ah! What is this! There are evidently some Brahmin's bones buried in one of the rooms. The dead man's spirit is working against us. A dead Brahmin is helping a living Brahmin!" "There are no bones of any Brahmin inside the palace" said the Nandas and Rakshasa. "There must be, I sense them" said Jeevasiddhi, and wandered from room to room uttering the queer nostrum: "I bow to Bali, the son of Vairochana, to Sambara, acquainted with a hundred kinds of magic, and to Nikumbha, Naraka, Kumbha, and Tantukachha, the

great demon; O Chandali, Kumbhi, Tumba, Katuka, Saraga, reveal to me the bones." Finally, in the room named by Chandragupta he halted and said "Ah, don't you feel the occult anti-magnetic waves? The bones must be here." The Nandas and Rakshasa scoffed at the idea. "There are no waves or bones here" said Dhanananda. Jeevasiddhi staked his reputation on the truth of what he said. "If I am wrong in this, I have overrated my abilities. If there are no occult anti-magnetic waves, I had better resign all pretensions to higher knowledge and leave the field to the Brahmins. But I have never yet been wrong. Do dig and see" he implored them. When the room was dug up, lo! the skeleton of a man was found there along with a gold coin[4] to show that it was a Brahmin's. The result was that Jeevasiddhi scored an unparalleled triumph. The Nandas and Rakshasa acclaimed him as the greatest occultist alive. "You are certainly a greater occultist and astrologer than any Brahmin I have seen yet" said Rakshasa. "None of the Brahmin occultists suspected the existence of these bones here. And yet you felt their presence at once." Jeevasiddhi thus won the immediate and implicit confidence of the Nandas and Rakshasa, and became their trusted friend and counsellor. At his instance, the bones were thrown into the Ganges secretly after the prescribed ceremonies and incantations were conducted. "Now we are free from these anti-magnetic waves of hostility" he exclaimed with satisfaction after this. "Chankya's spirits cannot now get any help from inside the palace of the Nandas."

A week later, he gave some incantated milk to the Nandas stating that it was to prevent the evil effects of

4. It is a deadly sin among the Hindus not to put some gold or silver coin when burning or burying Brahmins and Cobras.

a great act of sorcery performed by Chanakya to make them contract a deadly fever and die. He had himself mixed in the milk a medicine inducing a rise of temperature. So the Nandas got slight fever. "Don't be alarmed" said Jeevasiddhi, who had begun his counter incantations, "the force of Chanakya's incantations has been broken. He has only been able to bring on you a slight fever, and that too will pass away. I shall finish it off now" and he went on vigorously with his incantations. After an hour, he gave them some milk containing a hidden remedy for the fever. The princes got rid of the fever, and thanked Jeevasiddhi for saving them.

A fortnight after this, Jeevasiddhi began his incantations again and gave the princes some milk in which he had mixed a minute quantity of powdered *dhatura* seeds to induce temporary lunacy. All of them began to rave like maniacs some time after drinking the milk. Jeevasiddhi continued his incantations and gave them some more milk, this time mixed with a remedy for the raving. They drank it and gradually recovered their senses. "The wretch wanted to make all of you mad. I have prevented it" said Jeevasiddhi. The grateful princes gave him a handful of precious gems, diamonds, sapphires, rubies, pearls and emeralds of inestimable value. Jeevasiddhi received them and then threw them all over the place, exclaiming to the astounded princes "If I am possessed of this demon of desire for wealth, I cannot cope with any of the demons of Chanakya's black-magic at all." All the princes and Rakshasa were greatly impressed by this act of Jeevasiddhi indicating an utter disregard for wealth. Their confidence in Jeevasiddhi's greatness, trust-worthiness and loyalty became unshakeable.

Three months after Jeevasiddhi's advent, he asked the Nandas and Rakshasa why they were feeding a thousand Brahmins every day though the wretches were all secretly sympathising with Chanakya. "But we have all along fed Brahmins" said Rakshasa. "Why should you go on doing what you once began doing for no convincing reason?" asked Jeevasiddhi. "But Brahmins are holy men, and the Sastras[5] say that to feed them is a meritorious act" said Rakshasa. "All Brahmins cannot be holy men, seeing that the wretch Chanakya also is a Brahmin. As for the Sastras, the Brahmins themselves wrote them. I hold that there is no difference between Brahmins and others. Let the palace physician Abhayadatta take samples of the blood of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, Sudras, Chandalas, Buddhists, Jains, Ajivakas and Kapalikas and examine them. He will not find any difference in the blood." The astounded Nandas promptly asked Abhayadatta to perform the experiment. He said "Of course, the blood will be alike, just as the acts of conception, birth, puberty and death are processes common for all human beings." Still they insisted on his performing the experiment in their presence. He did so and satisfied them that the blood of every human being was fundamentally alike and that the caste could not be determined by looking at it. That settled it. "Why waste money on this senseless Brahmin feeding?" asked Dhanananda. The feeding of the Brahmins was stopped from the next day onwards. The Brahmins were discontented, and each became an underground volcano fomenting discontent and anxious to overthrow the Nandas. Jeevasiddhi was naturally glad. He wrote to Chanakya, "The fire has started. It is only a question of time when the whole forest of this usurping Nanda race will be one heap of ashes and charcoal."

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5. Sacred law-books of the Hindus.

After the Brahmin-feeding was stopped, there was no need for a Superintendent of the Banqueting Hall. "A Manager will do" said Dhanananda. So Chandragupta was reverted to his regiment, and his post as Superintendent abolished. But he was popular with the Brahmins and the other discontented elements in the city. He was also fast becoming an idol in the army. Wherever he went he was cheered and welcomed. The Nandas were, on the contrary, received with chilling silence born of sullen hatred. They did not like this at all. So, four months after Jeevasiddhi had reached Pataliputra, the Nandas and Rakshasa held a secret midnight council to decide on what should be done with Chandragupta, who was now living in a house in the city. Jeevasiddhi was for exiling him for life, as killing him might lead to a rebellion by his supporters. "No" said Rakshasa "for once, I must disagree with you. A cobra must either be worshipped or killed. There is no safe middle course. Exiling him would be allowing him to join forces with Chanakya and create danger to the State. We shall seize him suddenly to-morrow morning, and formally charge him with high treason, give him a nominal hearing to redeem our previous promise to him, and then condemn him to death and carry out the sentence at once in the palace dungeon itself instead of in the public execution place. There is a greater danger of a serious rebellion by him when alive than by his supporters after his death. He will act as the rallying point for all the malcontents, and the Brahmins will whip up support for him as the friend of Hindu Dharma and the real descendant of Mandhata, Bimbisara, and Ajatasatru the last of whom he is said to resemble closely in features. Once he is dead, there will be nobody with his military ability to lead the malcontents who will be therefore forced to keep quiet." "A very wise counsel" exclaimed Jeevasiddhi. "I freely confess that my

advice was not so sound, and so I withdraw it and vote for Rakshasa's course." All the rest also agreed. Bhaddasala was directed to arrest Chandragupta early in the morning without creating a situation and to take him at once to the council hall. All the councillors were directed to be present. Then the council broke up.

CHAPTER VI

ESCAPED !

AT 3 a.m. on a cold December morning there was a soft knock at Chandragupta's door. Chandragupta too had already woke up and was busy packing. He went to the door and found Chanakya's spy Siddharthaka waiting outside dressed like a cartman. " Your honour had better start at once" said Siddharthaka. " There is a cloth cart waiting. I shall be the cartman. Pray disguise yourself as a cart attendant. There is no time to lose. We have to escape to Vardhamanapura. Great tact has to be used, and your honour's identity carefully concealed." " I shall be ready in ten minutes" said Chandragupta. " Your honour is already aware of the council's decision !" said Siddharthaka in surprise. Chandragupta simply smiled in reply. Then he asked Siddharthaka " Tell me, do you feel anxious and excited ? " " We are accustomed to be in danger always. So, we rarely experience any excitement or anxiety. We know that no place is so safe as under the nose of the enemy" said the spy. Chandragupta smiled again. He went in and got ready in ten minutes. So natural did he look as the attendant on the bales of cloth that even Siddharthaka gaped with astonishment. " Your honour can adopt a disguise as well as we can" said he. " And why not ? "

asked Chandragupta. He got into the cart, put all his hoarded treasure in gold and gems inside a bale of cloth, sat on the bales, and studied the inventory given to him by the spy. Then the cart proceeded towards Vardhamanapura.

At the south-eastern gate, the seals of the bales were duly examined and the cart allowed to go out. It began to proceed on its way. Hardly had it gone five miles before the sound of horsemen galloping from behind was heard. It was daybreak. Turning round, Chandragupta found ten armed horsemen coming. Their captain reined in his horse as he passed the cart and asked Siddharthaka "Cartman, did you see any horseman come from the town?" "No, your worship" replied Siddharthaka. "The men at the gate told me that they saw none. We are out searching for Prince Chandragupta." said the Captain. "A proclamation has issued offering ten thousand gold panas for anybody giving information leading to his capture." "I have never seen the prince, your worship, and so can't say whether it was he, but I saw a young man mount a horse near the temple of Agni[1] outside the south-eastern main gate and gallop fast in the direction of Vardamanapura" said the cartman. "Ah, how long ago was this?" asked the captain. "About two hours ago, your worship. But he must be a long way off by now. Your worship knows how slow bullock carts are" said Siddharthaka. "All right, thank you. Now we must be off," said the captain. And the horsemen galloped past, raising a cloud of dust. "No place so safe as under the nose of the enemy" chuckled Siddarthaka as he drove on.

Fifteen miles further, they saw the party of horsemen resting under a tree near the rest-house and allowing their

1. The god of fire, the guardian deity of the south-eastern direction.

horses to graze. Siddharthaka too stopped his cart and watered the bullocks. "Did you see him?" Siddharthaka asked the captain. "Not a sign of him. What is more, this *gopa*[2] swears that he has been here since morn and that no horseman has passed this way" replied the captain. "The prince is reputed to be cunning. His taking a horse at that lonely temple, instead of passing through the gate on horseback, shows it. He must have espied the gopa at a distance and dismounted and taken a path across the fields. The ability and loyalty of our gopas are well known" replied Siddharthaka. The gopa beamed. "Yes, that must have been the case" said he emphatically. "But, till we came, you didn't know that we wanted him. So, you would not have detained him. Why should he have evaded you?" asked the captain. The gopa blinked. "The reason is obvious" said Siddharthaka. "Chandragupta would not have, in his position, liked his movements to be observed by a popular, able and influential gopa who would be quite capable of mobilising his men and overtaking him when the hue and cry was raised." "That is it" said the gopa. "I say, you are wiser than the majority of cartmen" said the captain. "Anyway, the bird has flown". "But you are not going to leave it at that?" asked Siddharthaka. "Oh, no. A party like ours has been sent along all the eight main roads. All of us have instructions to go to every town up to the very limits of the empire and warn all the officials to keep a sharp look-out for the prince" said the captain. "There will be thousands of others also looking out for him, hoping to get the reward." "Why, what is he up to now?" asked the cartman. "We don't know the details" said the captain, "but that monkey-faced Brahmin, Chanakya, is supposed to be doing some horrible

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2. The administrator of a group of villages.

black-magic to kill our king and princes and is also said to be moving heaven and earth to get some neighbouring kings and forest and mountain tribes to fight against our king. It has come out that he wants to crown prince Chandragupta king!" "Pooh! That seems to be simply impossible with such good princes and such an able prime minister like Subuddhisarman" said Siddharthaka. "Yes, that is so. But, on the other hand, look at it the way that man Chanakya does. 'How long did it take for Maharaja Mahanandin to be deposed?' he seems to have asked some one" said the captain. "But, does your honour think that Chanakya can do such a difficult thing?" asked Siddharthaka. "Certainly not" said the captain. "I don't fear the man's hill tribe friends at all. What disturbs me is his alleged capacity to become invisible. How can you fight a fellow who can become invisible whenever he wants?" "But, do you believe that Chanakya can become invisible?" asked Siddharthaka. "I don't know. People say he can. Give me a visible enemy, and I can fight him. It is these sorceries which are beyond me" replied the captain. "But you don't think that even if *he* can become invisible he could make *this prince* invisible?" asked the cartman. "Ah, I forgot that possibility" said the captain. "But what about the *horse*?" asked the gopa. "Surely, he who can make a man invisible can make a horse invisible too" said Siddharthaka. "I say, you are a very clever man. I never saw you pass this way before though I am almost always at this resthouse. What have you inside the cart? Cloth? Good, I wanted to buy some. Have you some Madura cloth?" asked the gopa. "Yes" said Siddharthaka opening a bale and handing over a small piece of fine home-spun as a souvenir. "Give me a piece too" said the captain. Chandragupta gave him a fine piece. The captain was highly pleased. "This attendant

of yours is more generous than you are" said he to Siddharthaka, "See what a big piece he has given me." "That is because you are a bigger man than the gopa" replied Siddharthaka. By this time the bullocks had drunk their fill from the trough and eaten some straw. Siddharthaka took leave of the gopa and the captain and proceeded on his way. After going a mile, he told Chandragupta. "It is difficult for princes to make small gifts". Chandragupta laughed. "What about Chanakya?" he asked. "None can excel the venerable Chanakya in generosity" said Siddharthaka. "If we are to consider the proportion between the gifts made and the things retained by the giver for himself, he will be the prince of givers, for he retains nothing and gives us everything." Chandragupta was pleased to hear this spontaneous outburst of praise from such a spy "What is your estimate of him otherwise?" he asked. "I can measure the ocean with an *ollock*[3] or the Himalayas with my cubit easier than give an estimate of him. He is so great and so unfathomable. Nobody can say what he will do and why. But never does Chanakya fail to keep his word. Nor will he let down his proteges" replied Siddharthaka.

The next day, in the afternoon, Siddharthaka and Chandragupta were at a well in a lonely wayside resthouse, when they saw Viradhagupta, a well-known spy of Rakshasa and a man who knew Chandragupta. The newcomer alighted from a chariot and went towards the very same well. Chandragupta promptly got into the hollow of a banyan tree near the well and remained concealed there. Viradhagupta went to the well and asked Siddharthaka to give him some water. After giving it, Siddharthaka asked him "Where is your honour coming from?" "From Vardha-

3. A small measure; roughly, half a pint.

manapura after a useless search for Chandragupta" replied the spy. "We have to rectify the follies of big men, cartman. First, they allowed that devil Chanakya to go unscatched. Now they have allowed Chandragupta to slip through. One of them would have been formidable enough. A combination of the two is like famine and pestilence combined." "Where is the wretch Chanakya now, Sir?" "Don't ask me! What do I know? The man is so cunning that he may be even in this resthouse now without one being the wiser for it!" "And Chandragupta, Sir?" "Oh, he is a simpler proposition. I can catch him if he is anywhere within a circumference of a hundred miles. Now I must hurry, The chariot is waiting here and Rakshasa is waiting at Pataliputra" said Viradhagupta. He quenched his thirst, hurried to the road, got into the chariot, and drove off. "No place so safe as under the nose of the enemy, eh?" said Chandragupta to Siddharthaka as he came out of the hollow. "But it was stuffy." "Banyan tree holes were not made for the residence of princes" said Siddharthaka.

After four days of journeying night and day, they reached Vardhamanapura at 7 P. M. and went to the house of the merchant where Chanakya was. Chanakya embraced Chandragupta warmly and said to him, when alone, "Of course, you must have heard that at the midnight council that day the decision was taken to seize you suddenly the next morning, have a mock trial, and execute you for high treason. Hence all this hurry and inconvenience." "Yes, Jeevasiddhi sent word to me even before Siddharthaka came. A man engaged in a dangerous enterprise must be prepared for any inconvenience. The only way to grow crops is by making the ground wet and muddy at first" said Chandragupta. "Well said" replied Chanakya. "Now go and have a bath and something to eat. Afterwards we shall talk."

CHAPTER VII

MAURYA'S STORY

CHANDRAGUPTA had a refreshing bath and a sumptuous dinner. The effects of the weary journey were all gone. After finishing his dinner he went and joined Chanakya who was in a jovial mood. "So, that is the way Nanda's secrets are kept" said Chanakya to him, "See how they filter through." "Only through that grand filter Jeevasiddhi" said Chandragupta, "And that is due to you. What comparison is there between the ministers of the Nandas and yourself? My grandfather Maurya used to say 'Granite breaks mud pots. Mud pots don't break granite'." "A very correct observation" said Chanakya, smiling. "Ah, that reminds me. Tell me the great Maurya's story. I long to hear it."

"Well" said Chandragupta. "As you know, Maurya was the son of Mahanandin by his wife Mura, the only daughter of the chief of the Moriyas of Pippalavana. Being the son of a *Vrata Kshatriya*[1] mother, he was not considered eligible for succession as against the two boys

1. A Kshatriya who abandoned his caste customs by his caste becoming Buddhist, and was therefore regarded as a Sudra by the orthodox Hindus, though he himself had reverted to Hinduism.

of the orthodox Kshatriya wife, queen Sunanda. But, poor Mahanandin had a favourite called Mahapadma who was born to a Kshatriya by a Sudra mother. His father, though a Kshatriya by birth, was so poor as to have to take to a barber's profession to eke out his livelihood. Mahapadma too became a barber like his father. As he was of higher caste than the other barbers, he was taken as the royal barber. He soon ingratiated himself with the feeble Mahanandin and his queen Sunanda. He had a phenomenal rise. In a few years he was made the chief minister and commander-in-chief. He became the idol of the army by reducing recalcitrant provinces like Kalinga into submission. The queen Sunanda became infatuated with him. She conspired with him to do away with the unsuspecting king. One day, the all-powerful Mahapadma slew the king and the two princes and had himself crowned. As he had been practically king even before, and as the whole army was for him, there was not the slightest opposition or even outcry except, from a Brahmin, the minister Sakatala's son, whom Mahapadma secretly killed and buried within the palace. After his coronation, Mahapadma openly married Sunanda, and had by her eight princes, the present king Sukalpa and his seven brothers.

" He was a strong and vigorous ruler, and put down with an iron hand the robbers, thieves and malefactors who had abounded in the weak reign of Mahanandin. He curbed the big nobles and the innumerable kinsmen of the royal family who had been allowed to become petty tyrants preying on the people. He overran Aryavarta[2] and the Deccan like a new Bhargava[3], uprooted many ruling dynasties and made the whole country between the

2. North India.

3. Parasurama; An Avatar of Vishnu.

Himalayas and Kuntala, the Jumna and Brahmaputra, subject to his authority. He patronised Brahmins and men of learning, like Vararuchi, Vyadi and Varsha, and was tolerant towards all the other sects from motives of policy. The army was brought to a high pitch of efficiency, the taxes were all regularly collected, canals were dug everywhere, a new set of weights and measures was introduced, and the land became rich and peaceful. His power was felt more by the nobles and big men than by the humble folk who liked him and did not worry about his early crimes. He recognized merit and tried to encourage it whenever it was not contrary to his own interests. So he trained up my grandfather Maurya, the infant son of Mura, as a captain on seeing his precocious genius for war, and made him his trusted lieutenant. Great were the victories won by these two together.

"Maurya rose to such high favour that he became the commander-in-chief. He came to look upon Mahapadma like a father. He and his band of hundred Moriya clansmen formed the *corps d'elite* of Mahapadma's bodyguard. So long as Mahapadma ruled, everything went well, though towards the end of his career he became unmindful of his council of ministers and thus caused great discontent among them and the wise men. But, still, his prestige was high, and his army strong. When he died of a fever, his empire, which stretched from Kamarupa to Kuntala, was unimpaired and prosperous.

"His sons, the present king and princes, succeeded him. Sukalpa was crowned king in the place of his father, and his seven brothers became sub-kings and governors of provinces. The efficiency of the administration suffered at once. The sons were as autocratic as their father, but lacked their father's military and administrative ability.

All the princes went on living at the capital instead of going and administering their provinces as advised by Nakranasa. They resented the advice and made Subuddhisarman, prime minister, causing heart-burning to Nakranasa and Sakatala. They wanted also to supplant the universally respected commander-in-chief Maurya by their own nominee Bhaddasala, a well-dressed man with no military ability at all, and secretly corrupt to the core. This was not an easy thing to accomplish openly in view of Maurya's great popularity with the army and the people. So, they plotted against Maurya for long.

"One day, four years ago, on the evil advice of Rakshasa and Bhaddasala, Maurya was trapped with his hundred lieutenants in the impregnable and secret underground council chamber on the banks of the Ganges by the side of the treasure house where Dhanananda has hidden his eight hundred million gold coins. The pretext was a secret conference to consider an invasion of the Punjab and other important military matters. When the great Maurya had gone there, unsuspecting and unarmed, with his hundred lieutenants, including me, Bhaddasala and Rakshasa closed all the seven trap-doors constructed one above the other at different levels, and left us all to perish of starvation. As if to mock us, provisions for one sumptuous meal were left for each of us to eat our last meal and die. There was also a great heap of fire-wood in the next room for burning our corpses.

"Maurya showed his greatness and resourcefulness even in that extremity. He allayed the resultant panic, and said to us 'There is no denying the fact that we are trapped for good, and that we cannot escape unless the Nandas themselves open the doors. I know the place well, and, indeed, took part in its construction. It is hopeless

to try to escape by ourselves. None but the great Chanakya can escape from this situation unaided'. 'Won't the army and the people rise on our behalf?' I asked. 'Oh, no, the army and the people generally follow the victors' said he. 'Do not hope for anything from them. Our only hope, and a very faint one, is that perhaps the Nandas themselves may open this charnel-house some months hence and may let out the survivor if he is only one. So, we have to devise a plan for avenging this act of treachery. If all of us eat even scantily, we shall exhaust all the provisions in three days, and then perish with none left to avenge us. Let us select one of us to survive and avenge us, and then let the rest of us die, leaving all the available provisions for the survivor. Choose the survivor.' All cried out 'You shall survive and avenge us. We shall all die.' 'No!' said he 'A leader should never survive. If I survive, I can only lead you to death. Besides, the Nandas are powerful. and it will require years of persistent work to uproot them. So a young man is required. Again, I have already told you that the Nandas alone must free the survivor. Do you dream that they will free me for whose sake they have trapped us all? So, I suggest that young Chandragupta survive as he is the youngest of us, and is a boy genius in war, and is not unpopular with the Nandas and Rakshasa, and has also been predicted by able astrologers to be certain of becoming an Emperor.' All agreed, though I myself demurred. Then they made me solemnly swear that I would not commit suicide and that, should I become free, I would spare no pains to avenge them all by exterminating the race of Mahapadma. Maurya also told me to get, at all cost, your aid in this. 'The one man who can do impossible things in our age is Chanakya. This is what I have heard from persons of judgment. If you ever come across him, make

him your friend, and stick to him till the end, for he is noble and unselfish and can make you accomplish all that you want' said he. I agreed to do so, and have now fulfilled that ardent desire of my departed grand-father.

"After I had taken the vow, the rest adjourned to another chamber, and Maurya killed them all. He then gave me his final instructions, kissed me on both my cheeks, and killed himself by falling on his sword. Then, as directed, I burnt their bodies and deferred the funeral ceremonies till I should become free and could get the services of Brahmins.

"Four months passed. My provisions too were being exhausted despite my sparing use of them. I was burning with sorrow and anger and thirsting with a desire to be free and to avenge my beloved kinsmen. Slowly despair began to possess me. Shall I ever get free, or had I eaten up the provisions of my beloved kinsmen only to die a lingering death after all this slow starvation? I regretted my vow not to commit suicide. A quick death on the sword, like theirs, was far better than death, inch by inch, by starvation.

"After twenty more days of agonized worry, I heard with my sharpened ears the sound of the opening of the locks. I listened with rapt attention and soon leapt with joy. The locks were really being opened, and I might become free once more, might see the streets, and the sun and the moon, and the stars, and trees and flowers, and men and women. But I resolved not to exhibit too much desire to be free lest I should thereby defeat my own object. Finally, people opened my door. Rakshasa came in with Dhanananda. I was sitting in a corner weeping and desolate. They exclaimed in joy 'Chandragupta is alive!'; and Sukalpa and the other brothers and Baddhasala also

rushed in. Then they saw the heap of bones I was keeping in a corner of the room to remind me of the beloved ones whose provisions I had been eating and keeping myself alive. They questioned me. I said 'They are the bones of the other hundred. They died on their swords the very day they were imprisoned, Maurya exclaiming "Once we have forfeited the confidence of our king, what is the use of our living? Let us all die on our swords, leaving only young Chandragupta alive. He is liked by the king and princes, and is a minor and has shared our fate only because of association with us. Let him therefore survive and take his chance of rescue by the King's grace."' 'Oh, he was nobler than I thought' said Rakshasa, and shed tears. Then Sukalpa said to me 'Chandra, you are set free, and will be given back all the lands and assets of Maurya. Forget the past and come with us. We need you. The King of Simhala has sent a lion in a cage. It moves about and is looked after by its keeper. He challenges us to let the lion out without opening the cage, and says that if we fail to do so in three days, all the Magadhas must concede the superiority of the Simhalas in wisdom. That we hate to do. And none of us could devise any method of doing this thing. So, in the last resort, we came here to see if you were available, for we know you to be the one man who could do it, if at all it could be done.' 'Leave me alone' said I, effectively concealing my inward joy, 'let me die here like my kinsmen. I do not want to live after their death.' 'But they wanted you to live' said Rakshasa. 'I do not want to come out and again be treated like this' said I. Then Sukalpa swore that nothing would be done to me thereafter, and that I would be treated like a member of the royal family.

"On this assurance, and on permission being accorded to take the bones of my kinsmen out and do their funeral ceremonies properly, I agreed to go out of the prison.

I examined the lion for an hour and found out that its movements in the cage were mechanically regular. So, I concluded that it was not a real lion but an artificial one made of wax. Calling for a red-hot iron, I thrust it into the lion which promptly melted and flowed out, to the astonishment of the assembled princes, ministers and populace, and vindicated the intellectual prestige of the Magadhas. The Nandas and Rakshasa and Baddhasala were all genuinely pleased with my achievement. They restored to me the lands and the properties of Maurya. I was also made a captain in the army. But finding that I was loved and honoured by all the soldiers, I was taken away from the regular army and was made the Superintendent of the banqueting hall in which capacity you found me" said Chandragupta.

"A very interesting story" said Chanakya. "It will become even more interesting when the astrologer's prophecy referred to by your grandfather comes true." "How can we rely on such predictions?" asked Chandragupta. "We should try and make them come true; there is no harm in exploiting the existence of such predictions in an effort to make them come true. Now we shall retire to sleep and think out to-morrow morning some means of escape from the kingdom of the Nandas" said Chanakya. "No place so safe as under the nose of the enemy. Let us lie low here for a while" said Chandragupta, and narrated their adventures on the way. "I too intended that we should remain here till the vigour of the search for you had abated somewhat. I am delighted to see that you also think out these things independently. Two heads are better than one. That idiot Viradhagupta's boast that he could capture you if you were anywhere within a hundred miles, when you were not even a hundred inches from him, is priceless. It is such things that add spice to life" said Chanakya.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NANDAS LEFT BEHIND

FOR two months Chandragupta remained with Chanakya in the merchant's house in Vardhamanapura. By that time the vigour of the search had abated though there were standing instructions to all officers throughout the Empire to arrest Chandragupta, wherever found, and the reward for his capture alive or dead had been increased. "We can be quite safe here for the rest of our lives if we had no other object but to live in safety" said Chanakya to Chandragupta. "But as we want to do something more than drag on an inglorious existence, it is essential that we should go to some place where we can get together an army to fight the Nandas. It is not so very difficult to uproot them. Even the great Persian Empire has been overthrown by a Yavana chieftain, Alikasundara, who is now with his army near the Gandhara country. So I suggest that we go across the Satadru[1] and get the help of the Aratti[2], the Valhikas,[3] the Kiratas and Kambhojas,[4] and

1. The Sutlej.

2. The Arashtri or kingless, that is, the republican nations of the Punjab south of the Chenab.

3. Bactrians.

4. The people of Ladakh and Little Tibet.

of the kings of Kashmir, Abhisara,[5] Takshasila and the Vitasta[6]. If necessary, we can also get the aid of the Sakas, Yavanas, Parsikas, and other Mlechchhas[7]. Parvataka or Parvateswara, the King of the Vitasta country, is a very ambitious man. He wants to conquer as many lands as possible and has already conquered some. He has also begun to call himself Puru or Paurava, fancying himself to be a great Aryan prince of the ancient and famous house of Puru instead of being a local chieftain of the Punjab of comparatively recent origin. He has a very ambitious brother called Vairochaka and several sons to be provided for. The Kings of Abhisara and Kashmir have been defeated by him and are now his allies. They are equally ambitious and will be ready to help us if we promise them plenty of gold. So too the barbarous tribes and even the Aratti." "But, reverend Sir," said Chandragupta "don't you think that these chieftains and especially Parvataka and Vairochaka, will try to rule Magadha themselves if called in to help us? I would like much rather that these usurping Nandas ruled than that my beloved Magadha should be ruled by those chieftains." "Have no fear" said Chanakya. "The chieftains shall only aid us. They shall not rule Magadha. Like a donkey carrying gold, like the razor shaving the chin, like the Asuras[8] preparing *amrita*[9], these chieftains shall be only our tools, not our masters. Leave all that to me. I know how to deal with them." "But, reverend Sir," said Chandragupta, "How can you meet their brute force?" "Like the snake-charmer controlling the snakes,

5. Abhisara is the mountainous district south of the Kashmir Valley.

6. The Jhelum, that is, of Poros, the king of that region.

7. Non-Hindu barbarians.

8. Demons.

9. Nectar.

like the mahout controlling the elephants" said Chanakya. "I have one request to make" said Chandragupta "I beg of you to do all the promising and diplomacy. I am no good at them. I shall do whatever fighting there is." "Very well" said Chanakya, "But, never contradict what I do or show your knowledge or disapproval thereof." "All right" said Chandragupta.

The next day Chanakya and Chandragupta set out on their long journey to the Punjab. Chandragupta disguised himself as a disciple of Chanakya. Chanakya's famous spies Siddharthaka, Samiddharthaka, Udumbara and Nipunaka also went along with them, though not in their company. After several days they reached Gaya. There one of the Kayastha[10] officers of the Nandas stopped them and asked Chanakya who the person with him was. "My disciple," replied Chanakya. "But he does not look a Brahmin," said the Kayastha officer. "The times when Brahmins could be recognised by their looks have gone," said Chanakya. "Nowadays, many a Brahmin looks a Sudra,[11] and many a Sudra looks a Brahmin. Why, you are a Kayastha, and yet you look a far better Brahmin than I." The officer smiled and let them pass. Chanakya did not want to take any more risks in that place. He took Chandragupta to a a rest-house. Both were very hungry. Chanakya went to the holy river-bed where many pilgrims were performing *Sraddhas*[12]. Large quantities of cooked food-stuffs had been left uneaten by the priests who had many *Sraddhas* to perform, and so could only eat a few things from each feast. Chanakya wrapped up a plentiful supply of food and went to

10. One of the castes among the Hindus, below the Brahmins in status.

11. The fourth caste among the Hindus.

12. Annual funeral ceremonies to the manes of the departed ones.

the rest-house where he and Chandragupta feasted on it. "Sir," said Chandragupta "Is it proper for us to eat the offerings to dead persons?" "Nothing is more proper" said Chanakya "than to eat food offered to the gods and the ancestors. Of course, even forbidden food can be taken in times of calamity and need. A great sage of old ate two handfuls of food from the eating bowl of an outcaste in order to save himself from death by starvation."

At Benares, Chandragupta and Chanakya were bathing in the Ganges at the Manikarnika ghat when a Nanda captain went round having a look at all the bathers. Chandragupta knew this captain and espied him from a distance. He told Chanakya of this. Chanakya at once made him dive into the water while he himself went and quarrelled with a Mahratta Brahmin who was bathing ten yards ahead. Chanakya pulled that Brahmin by the tuft and asked him what he meant by abusing him the previous day. The other replied equally angrily, and pulled Chanakya too by the tuft. The Nanda captain rushed to the scene of the quarrel leaving the place where Chandragupta was. He pacified the quarrelling Brahmins and proceeded on his rounds. Chanakya then left the Mahratta Brahmin (who was Siddharthaka in disguise) and finished his bath in peace. On the road to Prayag, in a lonely spot adjoining a jungle, a beggar asked Chandragupta for alms. Chandragupta took and gave him a gold coin unthinkingly. The astonished beggar exclaimed "Ah, you must be Prince Chandragupta for whose capture a hundred-thousand gold *panas* are offered." Chandragupta at once killed the man with his concealed dagger. "Too much avarice ends in death" said Chanakya, as Siddharthaka and Samiddharthaka came to the spot dressed as casual wayfarers and took the corpse and threw it into the thick bushes close by.

Muttra was reached several days later. Chanakya and Chandragupta had just sat down for a meal in a Brahmin's house there when Rakshasa's spy Priyamvadaka went along the street towards that house to take his meal. At that very moment, a snake-charmer, who was exhibiting his snakes in the front of the house, lost control over one of his cobras which rushed into the house. There was wild panic, and Chanakya and Chandragupta ran away by the back door. The snake-charmer entered the house and, after fifteen minutes, caught the snake, and put it back into his basket. The grateful hotel-keeper gave him plenty of milk and food free. The man put them in a basket, thanked the donor, and went away, leaving Priyamvadaka to eat his meal in peace. Then he joined Chanakya and Chandragupta under a lonely banyan tree away from the village, and all the three had their meal. When he took out the pot of milk, Chanakya took a small mud pot, poured a generous quantity of milk into it and said " Siddharthaka, feed your fangless cobra with it. It saved us."

Three months after they started from Vardhamanapura, Chanakya and Chandragupta, with Siddharthaka going in advance and Nipunaka following behind, and Samiddharthaka and Udumbara hovering about in the vicinity, reached Indraprasta on the Jumna. All the six went into a rest-house, though the spies occupied different portions. Chanakya sauntered out alone into the streets. Crowds of Magadhan troops, elephantry, cavalry, chariots and infantry, were in the city. Near Takshasila gate, Chanakya was stopped by General Balagupta, the officer in command of the chariots. " Where are you going, Sir ? " asked Balagupta. " We are a party of six. We want to go to Holy Amarnath," said Chanakya. " Don't you know that the way is blocked by ferocious barbarians and Mlechchas under a man called

Alikasundara[13] ? He has defeated the powerful Parvataka calling himself Paurava. The king of Takshasila let the man into our country through the passes and is even now helping him. Parvataka too is assisting him now. The Kalachuris and the valiant Kshatriyas of Sangala have been smashed by the combined forces of this barbarian and our own kings of the Punjab calling themselves Ambasthas, Pauravas and what not. That is why our army has been mobilised here for the last one month ready for the enemy. I am told that the barbarian troops will not dare to meet our troops." "Who is in command of our troops ? " asked Chanakya. "Baddhasala is in command, under the directions of the King and the princes." "Is prince Chandragupta commanding his division ?" asked Chanakya. "Oh, no, the prince is now fleeing from justice. There is a price on his head. A hundred-thousand gold *panas* await him who takes him alive or dead." "A hundred-thousand gold *panas* !" said Chanakya. "I see that your greed is roused. Well, let me tell you, I never hanker after such blood-money" said Balagupta. "Why, what is the harm in taking it, Sir, when the king offers it ?" asked Chanakya. "None, perhaps, but I served Maurya when he was commander-in-chief, and I should not like to betray his grandson for all the gold in the world" said Balagupta. "You seem to be Chandragupta's friend." "Yes, I am ready to die for him, Sir. He is not only my relative but my former chief's grandson" said Balagupta. Seeing how staunch a friend he was of the family, Chanakya told him about their flight and secured all the help he wanted for his stay there and a safe pass across the Jumna past the Nanda lines.

As they were crossing the Jumna, leaving the serried troops of Magadha behind them, Chandragupta's eyes

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13. Alexander.

watered, and he whispered to Chanakya "I feel sorry at my not being able to fight shoulder to shoulder with these men. Many of my companions are there at the head of their divisions though they have not recognised me in my disguise" "Well, one day, you will be at their head. Indeed, you will, God willing, be at the head of a mightier army than ever man saw in this country since the Mahabharata war. But, first let us overthrow these usurping Nandas and make you king" said Chanakya. The boat landed them on the other shore. They bade farewell to Balagupta's men who took them to be mere pilgrims, and proceeded on their way. "This is the first time I have left Magadha" said Chandragupta sadly as he proceeded. "God knows when I shall return." "We shall return as soon as we have gathered together an army strong enough to fight the Nandas. It may take some time, but there is no doubt that we leave Magadha only to return" said Chanakya.

CHAPTER IX

THE THUNDERBOLT BURSTS ON IND

ASVAJIT, King of the Asvakani[1], and his queen Kalapini were sitting in their private audience-chamber in the great fortress city of Masika[2] or Masakavati or Massaka, their capital, giving audience to Karala, the special envoy sent by Taxila and Omphis. Karala was a relative of Kalapini who had implicit confidence in his wisdom. Asvajit was thirty years old, and wolf-like in appearance. Kalapini[3] was twenty-two, and strikingly handsome, but timid. Karala had the cunning face of a fox and the suave manners of a born ambassador. He had been telling Asvajit and Kalapini of the impending attack on the fort by Alexander and had been impressing on them the wisdom of the well-considered advice of Taxila and Omphis to submit like them and save their lands and liberties. " We Asvakas have never submitted to anybody willingly. Even conquerors have found it the hardest job to conquer us, and harder still to retain our country " said Asvajit. " What has this Alexander done

1. Asvakani or Assakanoi or Asvakas are the modern Afghans. The name means 'horsemen.'

2. Masika means " serpents' hole," a name indicating the supposed impregnability of the fort and the valour of its defender

3. 'The Moon,' to indicate her beauty.

"What did they do to cement this kinship?" asked Asvajit. "They took Alexander and his generals and some select men to Mount Meros[5] to witness a festival in honour of Dionysius. There was much drinking of light wines and many folk-dances and song-recitals. For ten days the Greek soldiers revelled in the jungles, drinking and dancing and singing with the Nyseans, feeling a kind of kinship with these simple folk who danced and drank with them in perfect comradeship."

"When is he expected here?" asked Asvajit. "Indeed, they say he may be here even today. That is why Taxila and Omphis have sent me urgently counselling you to submit." "Let us also swear allegiance to Alexander like Taxila and Omphis" said Kalapini to Asvajit. "No. Never!" said Asvajit. "Nobody shall say that I brought my country to disgrace. We shall fight, as our ancestors did, for the honour of our race and the independence of our hills. We have got 20,000 cavalry, among the finest in the world, and 30,000 infantry, besides the 7,000 veteran Madrakas under Vijayavarman. We can hold out indefinitely in this serpent's hole of a fortress. Anybody attacking this will be bitten. Even if this fort falls, we can easily shift to Aornos which has also been put in a fit state to stand a long siege and is in charge of my mother. Aornos will never be conquered." Just then, a messenger came and said to Asvajit "Sire, the Yavana army is only twenty miles away." "All right" said Asvajit. "I shall go, and, in consultation with Vijayavarman, take steps for according them a fitting reception." He then rose and went out. "He is obstinate, as Omphis feared" said Karala to Kalapini, "He told me 'My cousin Kalapini is intelligent and sensible, and knows when to defy and when to bend. Her husband, Asvajit, is obstinate and

5. Modern Koh-i-Mor.

knows only to defy, It doesn't do always to be a fighting ram even in the face of a lion. My pretty cousin has no influence over him in political matters. What a pity!'"

"What to do! These people here do not know politics. They know only to fight. Even if they are defeated today, they live in the hope of being able to fight to-morrow" said Kalapini. Then she asked in a whisper "They say Alexander is very handsome. Is that true?" "He is as handsome among men as you are among women" said Karala. Kalapini blushed. Then she went in, and Karala went out on his own errand.

That afternoon, the Greek army reached Masika. Alexander was struck by the strategic position of the town. He told Krateros "On the south and west are gigantic rocks which defy climbing. On the east is a swift-flowing mountain torrent, the Masakavati river. A mighty rampart of stone, brick and timber, four miles in circumference, surrounds the fort which has also a moat all round its three sides and the river on the fourth. We must carefully plan the attack." Just then the Asvakas under Asvajit and Vijayavarman sallied out of the fort and, by a fierce attack, forced the Greeks to fall back on a hill some 3 miles away. But Alexander rallied his troops and drove back the Asvakas into the fort.

Early next morning, when reconnoitring, Alexander was wounded on his leg by an arrow shot from the battlements. Without waiting to have it bandaged, he went on supervising the siege arrangements, completely invested the fort, and began raising a mole level with the ground. Then alone did he go and have his wound bandaged. By that time the blood had clotted, and there was terrible pain. "All know me to be divine and to be the son of Zeus, but I now feel myself also to be human" said

Alexander jocularly to Eumenes. After the wound had been dressed, he returned to the fort. The moat was bridged, and movable towers and other engines taken to the walls and trained against them, and a breach effected.

Alexander led his men through the breach with intent to storm the fort. The Asvakas under Asvajit and Vijayavarman drove the Greeks back after a fierce hand to hand fighting. Alexander renewed the assault with greater vigour. A wooden tower was brought up against the wall from which the archers shot against the Asvakas. Missiles were also discharged against the defenders from engines. Asvajit drew off his men from within the range of these missiles. The Greeks were unable to force their way within the walls. "Your missiles are superior to ours, not your men" jeered Asvajit.

The third day, Alexander threw a bridge across the moat. A regiment of Macedonians rushed along the bridge which broke down under their weight and threw them into the moat where many were killed by the arrows, stones and other missiles thrown by the Asvakas. Alexander could with difficulty extricate the remaining, who were all wounded. He said to Krateros "Asvajit is the soul of all this resistance. Till he is killed, it will be difficult to take the fort. So, let us concentrate on him. He is always in front of his men and makes an easy target." The next day, at break of dawn, the Macedonians renewed their attack. Asvajit led his Asvakas to repel it and was in front as usual. The Macedonians hurled their missiles in hundreds at him. A chance missile from a catapult struck him, and he fell down dead.

Alexander took the opportunity of storming the fortress when the Asvakas were disheartened by the loss of their

leader and the timidity of Kleophis who was won over at this critical moment to the policy of submission by Karala. With a determined rush, the Macedonians advanced, effected a breach in the fort walls, and captured the outer fort. The Asvakas ceased fighting under orders from Kleophis who met Alexander with her infant son and prayed him to spare his life. "Give me my son" said she, looking into his eyes. Alexander was dazzled by her beauty, and said "You shall see the measure of my kindness as soon as I capture the whole fort" and sent her and her son to a tent.

The seven-thousand Madraka warriors under Vijayavarman retired to the inner fort whence they threatened a prolonged resistance. They had provisions for nine months. Alexander called on them to surrender and give up their arms. Vijayavarman, replied "No. We Madrakas never surrender our arms. We can fight you and your troops and all your allies, old and new. War has no terrors for us any more than for you, for fighting is our caste profession. Brave Asvajit has fallen, but we remain. We know, as well as you do, how very inconvenient for an invader it will be to undertake a prolonged siege of a first class fort. So unless you permit us to withdraw with all our arms honourably into our country, we shall not evacuate this place." "I shall do better than that" said Alexander. "I shall not only allow you to keep your arms, but also shall employ you in my service at one and a half times the pay hitherto given to you by Asvajit, and you shall aid me in conquering India." "Oh no. The venerable Chanakya has told me only last year that we Kshatriyas should never fight for foreigners against Aryas and Aryavarta. That was also the spirit which moved the great Asvajit." "The Asvakas have surrendered. So it is really ungrateful on your part to continue to occupy their fort and eat up their provisions and invite thorough destruction on your erstwhile hosts and masters" said

Alexander. Vijayavarman replied " We cannot but defend the fort unless the Asvakas release us from the obligation and ask us to take service elsewhere." " Is not my word enough ?" asked Alexander in surprise. " No " said Vijayavarman. " We cannot take our orders from you but only from our employers, the Asvakas, now represented by their queen." " She is my prisoner" said Alexander. " That does not matter. She is still our mistress," replied Vijayavarman. Alexander reflected for a while. If he dallied here to fight these desperadoes to a finish, he was sure to waste many precious months and spoil all his plans. So he bit his lips and called Kleophis and said to her " These men will not take their orders from Alexander, but promise to obey you, oh Kleophis. So, give your orders to them to abandon the inner fort, if you prize the safety of your infant son." Weepingly, Kleophis came out and released the Madrakas from their vow and asked them to go away from the inner fort and take service elsewhere. Alexander promised not to molest them when withdrawing. Then Vijayavarman withdrew with his men to a hill nine miles from the Macedonian camp. " Think once more of my offer of service in my army. Forget the advice of that fool. I am only a Greek by race. I want to make the whole world kin. I feel no difference between Greek, Egyptian, Persian and Indian. Sasigupta will tell you that " said Alexander to him. " I shall consider and give you a reply in two days " said Vijayavarman as he led his troops away. It was 8 a.m. then.

Alexander called Sasigupta and Krateros and said to them " These men are very dangerous. They are as proud as the Greeks, and, though mercenaries, have a high sense of honour, and do not allow considerations of money to weigh much with them. If they decide to join us as our mercenaries, well and good. If not, we must destroy them.

We cannot afford to allow them to go to India spreading this spirit of defiance at Taxila and other places where people are now afraid of us. Our success is largely due to our prestige and the fear and respect our name evokes. But these men have neither fear nor respect for us. So they must be wiped out unless they agree to be our mercenaries. Set some spies to find out their intentions and inform me of them by this evening."

At noon that day, Sasigupta went to Alexander and said that the spies had returned with the information that Vijayavarman and his men had resolved not to aid the foreigner in the subjugation of their own countrymen and had decided to slip away in the middle of the night. Alexander thereupon suddenly fell upon the unsuspecting Madrakas and slaughtered a good number of them before they could realise the situation and defend themselves. When they realised their position, they quickly formed themselves into a hollow circle with their women and children in the centre and offered a desperate resistance in which their women took an active part. No thought of surrender entered their minds. They spoke out "Kshatriyas we are, and like Kshatriyas we will die." Their heroism was in vain against such immensely superior numbers. After a desperate fight they were overpowered, and all men were killed with the exception of Vijayavarman who escaped on a swift horse. When the massacre was over, Krateros said to Alexander, "They have met a glorious death which they would have disdained to exchange for a life with dishonour." "Yes, and we have escaped a great danger by destroying these wasps at the very outset," said Alexander. "They would have stirred up the spirit of revolt all over India and caused unnecessary bloodshed. So fall the enemies of Alexander."

That night there was a banquet in the Greek camp and much drinking and singing and gloating over the fall of Massaka and the extirpation of the Madrakas. Kleophis too was there as the new ally of the Macedonians. At the end of the revels she retired with Alexander to his tent. " How easily she has been conquered by him ! " said Onesikritos to Sasigupta. " It is the ancient custom of the Asvakas for a wife to commit Sati on her husband's pyre " said Sasigupta, " But, carried away by her love for her son and her great anxiety to save him, she has sacrificed her all " " Pooh ! " said Onesikritos " Where is her sacrifice ? She has got the love of the conqueror of the world who is not usually susceptible to female charms. His favourite saying is 'Sleep and Sex are the two things that remind me that I am mortal. The one I take as little as possible, the other I entirely eschew.' He refused to see Stateira, the wife of Darius reputed to be the most beautiful woman of Asia, saying 'Women are torments to the eye, and it is best to avoid temptation.' Still, he has fallen for Kleophis. She ought, therefore, to thank her stars for this unusual luck. She will now get a glorious son who will remake the history of the Asvakas." " You don't know our people yet " said Sasigupta. " Any son of hers by Alexander will not get a single Asvaka to uphold his claims, though he may lead savage non-Aryan tribes. The surviving Asvakas have already proclaimed the mother of Asvajit queen and have retired to Aornos. By the way, do you know that I have been promised the governorship of Aornos ? " " Yes. I hear, however, that it is going to be a harder nut to crack than Massaka." " It is certainly the strongest fort in the whole of the Asvaka country, but it will not be too difficult for Alexander to tackle, especially with the aid of my guides " said Sasigupta.

The Greek army now advanced on Aornos[6]. This famous fortress was situated on a hill six-thousand feet high and had a circumference of twelve miles. On the south flowed the Indus, deep and awe-inspiring and with precipitous rocks and crags overhanging from the fort. On the other three sides were ravines, cliffs and swamps. On the top of the fort was arable land requiring a thousand men to cultivate it and capable of feeding thirty-thousand men indefinitely. There were also perennial springs and reservoirs. Alexander surveyed it admiringly and exclaimed "This north-west frontier of India is a wonderful country. Every hill here is a natural fort, and every man a born soldier."

He isolated the fort by placing garrisons in the surrounding towns of Nora, Bazira, Massaka and Nysa, and by marching into the plains and recapturing Pushkalavati which had revolted again. He was assisted in this by two Indian chiefs who were friends of Taxila. He then made his way to the little town of Embolima lying at the foot of Aornos and on the same side of the Indus. He established Krateros there with a depot. Sasigupta brought some local guides who, for a liberal reward, showed the Greeks a secret path leading up to the eastern spur of the mountain on which Aornos was situated. Ptolemy, son of Lagos, was entrenched there with his men. Alexander's attempt to effect a junction with Ptolemy was repulsed by a sally from the fort. The defenders of the fort made a vigorous counter-attack to dislodge Ptolemy from his position and were repulsed after a very hard fight. Alexander made a desperate attack on the third day and effected a junction with Ptolemy after a terrible fight. Then, Alexander was busy filling in the ravines which were preventing an assault on the citadel. He directed his men

6. Modern Pir-Sar.

to cut and throw trees into the ravine separating them from a twin hill which commanded the hill on which was situated Aornos. He himself helped to throw the first tree into the ravine amidst the applause of his men. Trees were cut rapidly thereafter and placed across the ravine. In four days the ravine was fit for being crossed, and Alexander crossed it and occupied the hill overlooking Aornos.

The defenders of Aornos gave up all hopes of effectually defending the fort, and pretended to negotiate for terms while their real object was to slip away from the fort with their arms under cover of the night. Alexander was apprised of this by Sasigupta. Taking seven-hundred picked men, Alexander, Krateros, Sasigupta and others clambered up the cliff the moment the garrison was slowly beginning to retire, and slew many of them. The fort was captured. Alexander offered sacrifice to the gods, set up altars for Athene and Nike, and established a garrison in the fort of which he made Sasigupta the commandant as a reward for all his faithful service.

Then Alexander marched to conquer Dyrta whither the remaining Asvakas had concentrated. On his advance, the Asvakas left that fort and fled across the Indus to Abhisara and Poros who had resolved to fight the invader. The resistance of the Asvakas appeared to have been spent up for the time being. Alexander occupied Dyrta and marched to Udabhandapura on the Indus and joined Hephaistion and Perdikkas who were camping there in perfect comfort and ease and had made every preparation for his advent and the crossing of the Indus.

At Udabhandapura Alexander learnt that old Taxila had died and that Omphis had succeeded him. He also received an embassy from Omphis tendering his formal

submission and presenting him with thirty elephants, 3,000 oxen fatted for the shambles, 10,000 sheep and 200 talents of silver. Alexander was highly pleased with this. When the embassy had retired, he said to Hephaistion, "These Indian princes are more sensible than the tribal chieftains we had to deal with so far. They recognize their own weakness and inability to fight us, and readily submit. I hope Poros also will submit soon and send an embassy." "We are in an unknown country and can never be very sure of what these people really think in their innermost hearts. I heard from a local chieftain that Omphis had tendered his submission only because he cannot hope to fight Poros and Abhisara alone and wants us to defeat his foes for him. I heard further that Vijayavarman, who escaped the other day, was trying to persuade all the Indian princes of this part of the country to unite together and fight us, and that Poros and Abhisara were thinking of making peace with Omphis if the latter joined with them in opposing us" said Hephaistion. "And what did Omphis say?" asked Alexander. "Omphis is strongly for our alliance. He does not trust Poros and Abhisara and their offers of peace. He is convinced that the moment we go away they will fall upon him and finish him. So, he will never aid them or oppose us. But the Brahmins of Taxila are against us and are trying to spur him on to oppose us. So he is pretending to reconsider the position." "Well, he had better not reconsider anything if he is wise. He cannot fight, and will be rooted out if he opposes us. I thought the fate of the mercenaries would have been a sufficient warning to him. It is a pity that Vijayavarman was allowed to escape" said Alexander. "I was told by Krateros that some of our troops felt that they ought not to be massacring those fellows after a promise of immunity and that therefore they did not try their utmost to prevent his flight and escape" said Hephaistion. "Yes, I too had that

kind of feeling towards the end. That is why we spared the women though they had taken an active part in the resistance" said Alexander. "But, even that has only added fuel to the fire. Vijayavarman seems to have regarded their being saved and kept as the mistresses of our troops as an additional ground for taking an implacable revenge on us. He is said to have taken a terrible oath in the name of an Indian goddess called Kali, resembling one of our own Furies, to kill our captains and troops and friends in revenge and never to have the least pity on any friend of ours even if he should happen to be his own brother" said Hephaistion. "Poor man, what chance has he of fulfilling this absurd vow?" said Alexander. "As much chance as a mustard seed has of taking revenge on the person who fries it, as Omphis's ambassador neatly put it" said Hephaistion. "'A mustard seed may, by the mere frying, succeed in jumping out of the pot, but can it take revenge on the pot or the person frying?' he asked." "A very sensible view" said Alexander. "These men of Taxila seem to be more practical and realistic than Vijayavarman and the gymnosophist dreamers of whom Sasigupta was talking to me."

For thirty days the Greek army rested at Ohind on the banks of the Indus holding games and gymnastic contests and grand feasts every day. All this while a bridge of boats was being constructed across the Indus. Several boats had been got from the King of Taxila across the river; several more had been constructed. Then they were all put across the river in a chain linked to one another with planks and kept in their places against the current with wicker-baskets loaded with stones which acted as anchors for every boat. Railed gangways were put up on both sides of the planks for the horses to be taken across with greater safety. Then the whole army went across safely with a great deal of noise but with not a single accident.

Alexander offered the usual sacrifices to the gods as a thanksgiving for the safe crossing. Taxila lay at a distance of only three days' march. The Greek army was in friendly country and marched on gaily and carelessly, led by the guides of Taxila. When they were four or five miles from Taxila, they saw to their surprise a regular army of elephants, cavalry, chariots and infantry advancing on them in battle array. Alexander at once remembered Haphaistion's story of the attempts of Vijayavarman and the gymnosophists to turn Omphis hostile to him and believed that they had succeeded, and that Omphis was really going to attack his army. Immediately he had the guides of Taxila put in chains, and then arranged his own troops in regular battle array for falling on the Indian army. Omphis saw this with alarm and at once galloped forward with a few attendants in front of his army and explained that he had come in battle array only to honour the great conqueror, whom he regarded as a pure Kshatriya, and that his entire army was at Alexander's disposal. "We never attack without an ultimatum and a declaration of war" said he; and Alexander remembered his own attack on Vijayavarman, and kept silent.

CHAPTER X

THE SON OF ZEUS

WHEN Alexander rode into the vast meadow at the entrance to the City of Takshasila he was puzzled at seeing a number of Brahmins stamping upon the ground constantly in the presence of himself and his army. He asked them through interpreters what they meant by so doing. Their leader replied, "Oh King Alexander, each man can possess but as much of the earth as we have trodden upon. You, though a man like the rest of us, pretend to own the whole earth and wickedly disturb the peace of the world and have come so far from home to plague yourself and every one else. Yet, ere long, when you die, you will possess just so much of the earth as will suffice to make a grave to cover your bones. That is what we mean to signify by our stamping on the ground." "You seem to be men who have thought over the problems of life and death in a way quite different from me" said Alexander. "Simply because we die one day, why should we be content to occupy only six feet of earth even when alive as if we were already corpses? Where will be the spirit of adventure, the unique glory of man, if we do not roam the lands and seas? Anyhow, I should like to meet you at leisure

and discuss these and similar problems. Tell me where you live and who your teachers are and what you do all day long." "We pass the day-time in a wood two miles from here. Our Guru is Dandiswami. Sobhanaswami, called also Kalyanaswami or Kalanos, is another of the senior sages there. We eat such fruits and roots and wild herbs as we can find, and drink only water. We wander about in the wood during the day-time, meditating on God and the problems of life and death. At night we return to the city and sleep in the almshouses. Sometimes we spend the nights also in the wood on the pallets of the leaves of trees" said their leader. "Won't you come to my camp and have a talk?" asked Alexander. "No. We cannot do that now. We must get Dandi's leave" said their leader. Then they went away.

When he reached his camp, Alexander sent Aristoboulos to go into the city and take some of these ascetic Brahmins to him. Aristoboulos saw in the streets two of them. The elder had his head shaved, and the younger wore his hair. Disciples attended on both. Aristoboulos took them both to the camp and said to Alexander, "These gymnosophists spend their time generally in the market place, and are honoured as public counsellors and allowed to take away gratis any article which they choose. People who accost them pour jasmine-oil on their heads as a mark of honour, and offer them cakes made of honey and sesamum, of which large quantities are sold in the shops." It was lunch time then. Alexander invited them to join in the lunch. They did so and partook of some fruits but drank only water and ate standing at Alexander's table. To give the king a sample of their endurance, they withdrew after their repast to a spot a little removed from the table. The elder lay on his back on the bare ground and endured first the burning

sun and then the pouring rain. The other stood on one leg holding up with both his hands a bar of wood three cubits long. On that leg being tired, he rested his whole weight on the other leg and did this throughout the day. "What a waste of energy!" said Alexander to Eumenes after they went. "Diverted to useful action this immense labour of theirs could have made hundreds happy and comfortable instead of merely remaining as an endurance test and making these two uncomfortable.

The next day, Omphis sent to Alexander's camp two Aghorapanthis[1], the custom among whom was to eat up the bodies of their deceased parents as a kind of pious ritual. "Do you really follow this horrible custom?" asked Alexander. "How can you do such a thing to those you loved when they were alive? Are you not ashamed of it?" "Sir," asked one of them, "What do you do to the dead bodies of your parents?" "Bury them" said Alexander. "And allow them to putrefy and become worms, whereas we eat them up reverently and make them bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh!" retorted the man. "The men of Ierne[2] too have the same horrible custom, besides even more horrible customs[3], but they do not waste their time finding a philosophical reason for them" said Alexander.

All this enhanced Alexander's curiosity about the forest sages. So he sent Onesikritos to the forest where they lived in order to induce Dandiswami or Kalyanaswami or at least some of the others to go and reside for some time in the Macedonian camp by tempting them with rich viands and drinks and presents and the privilege of being with such a great king. Onesikritos went to the wood which

1. A sect of ascetics practising strange and even abhorrent rites.
2. Ireland.
3. See Strabo.

was two miles from the city. He found fifteen sages there standing in the hot sun in different attitudes, sitting or lying down naked, though the sun was so hot that no one could walk barefooted at midday without suffering tortures of pain. He was told that they would be in the same positions till the evening and would then return to the city. He found Sobhanaswami or Kalyanaswami or Kalanos lying naked upon a heap of stones. He approached him and said that Alexander had sent him to converse with him, as he had heard about his wisdom and wanted to know more about it. Sobhanaswami uttered his usual benediction 'Kalyana!' (prosperity to you!), from which he had got his other name Kalyanaswami, shortened as Kalanos by the Yavanas. Then seeing the cloak, head-dress and shoes of Onesikritos, he laughed and said, "Formerly there was as great a super-abundance of corn and barley in the world as there is now of dust. There were fountains of pure water, milk, honey, *soma,* ghee and oil in those days. But men became proud and insolent from this luxury and ease. So God destroyed them all and consigned man to a life of toil. When temperance and other virtues appeared in consequence of toil, the good things abounded once more. Again, satiety and wantonness are raising their heads, and the present abundance may be destroyed once more. So, try to manage with as little as possible. If you wish to hear my discourse, strip off your clothes and lie down naked beside me on these stones, and hear what I have to say." When Onesikritos was hesitating as to what he should do, Dandiswami reproached Kalanos for his insolence, a vice which he himself had been condemning, and asked him to discourse with Onesikritos without compelling him to strip himself.

Onesikritos thereupon left Kalanos and went to Dandiswami, and requested him to go with him and live in

Alexander's camp in luxury and ease and give Alexander the benefit of his wisdom. "Not only do I refuse to accompany you, but I also forbid the others to go with you" said Dandiswami who was 75 years old, was dark brown in complexion, and of medium size. He was completely naked. His face was serene, and his eyes calm. He had the look of one who had attained peace. "Why, don't you want to meet the great conqueror? Do you consider him to be just an ordinary man not worth meeting?" asked Onesikritos. "Oh no, he is undoubtedly a great man. I commend him because he is desirous of acquiring wisdom though he governs so vast an empire. He is the only philosopher in arms that I have seen" said Dandiswami. "What according to you is the real wisdom worth knowing?" asked Onesikritos. "That the only reality is God who is diffused throughout this Universe. The world is a dream-like illusion. The very same things will cause some people joy, and some sorrow. The world has a beginning and an end, and is liable to destruction. Not so God who is without beginning and without end. He created the world and governs it, and is diffused through all its parts. So, truly religious men should depend on no one but God. Everything depending on others causes sorrow, and everything depending on oneself causes joy. We should abstain from animal food, and, if possible, even from all cooked food, and subsist on fallen fruits and fresh water. Men need not wear any clothes as God has given the body itself as a covering for the soul. All men are held in bondage, like prisoners of war, by their own innate enemies, gluttony, anger, joy, grief, longing, desire and such like. Only the men who triumph over these enemies go to God. When these have shuffled off their bodies they see the pure sunlight as fish see it when they spring up out of the dark depths of the ocean into the air."

"What is the nature of God?" asked Onesikritos. "God is light, but not such light as we see with the eye, nor such light as is seen in the sun or fire. In our Vedas God is described by the seers. Brahma and Veda are identical. God is the Word. He wears his Maya, the illusion of the world, as his outer garment. When that is pierced through with faith and knowledge, he appears like pure light beyond the darkness. But, before we can pierce that Maya, we must shed the bonds imposed upon us by our bodies. The body is the fruitful cause of wars. We have to fight against it, and the thousand passions it gives rise to, like soldiers contending against an enemy. In this battle there is no room for any truce or treaty or compromise. It must be a fight to the finish. The dark passions must be annihilated before we can see the light of God" said Dandiswami.

"What according to you is the first step in the spiritual discipline which leads to that consummation?" asked Onesikritos. "We must liberate the mind from pleasure and pain." "How can we be free from pain altogether, since all labour involves pain? So, how can man, who has to do some labour or other, in order to live, free himself from pain?" asked Onesikritos. "You are mistaken" replied Dandiswami. "Pain differs from the exertion involved in labour in that pain is pernicious while labour is friendly. For, men exercise their bodies with labour to strengthen the mental powers, whereby they are able to end dissensions and give every one good advice both in public and in private matters. Pain merely debilitates man and weakens his mental powers. Labour, like the company of those with higher ideals, elevates man." "I see. Then, don't you think that Omphis is doing the right thing in welcoming Alexander as an ally?" asked Onesikritos. "Yes, for, by entertaining a person better than himself as friend, he might

be improved, while by entertaining a worse he might become worse. And Alexander is certainly greater than Omphis. Now, tell me, are there not men in your own country who teach much the same philosophy as I summarised to you?" "Yes; Pythagoras, and Socrates and my own teacher Diogenes teach like you indifference to pleasure and pain. Pythagoras has also asked his disciples to abstain from eating whatever has life. But none of them preach this doctrine of nakedness which you follow." "That is because they make the mistake of preferring custom to nature. Else, they would not be ashamed to go naked like us and live on frugal fare. That indeed is the best house which needs the least repairs." "Perhaps they thought that nakedness might increase the temptation to lust, and so did not oppose the donning of dress" said Onesikritos. "That objection can only apply to ordinary people who have not yet obtained a mastery over their senses. For these, some dress may be necessary, like locks against thieves, but even for them only the minimum required for that purpose. The evolved man, with a complete mastery over his senses, can go about with his whole body as naked as his nose and not suffer the least injury" retorted Dandiswami.

"Two men from the Kaukasos[2] regions were sent by Omphis to our camp. They said that they were in the habit of eating up the corpses of their parents and near relatives in that tribe. Indeed, when Alexander rebuked them for this impious custom they asked him what we did with our parents, and, on being told that we buried them, expressed the greatest horror at the impiety involved in thus surrendering up our dearest and nearest ones to worms instead of eating them up and enshrining them in our bodies and making them bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh" said Onesikritos. "They

2. The Hindu-Kush.

are Aghorapanthis" said Dandiswami. "Do you approve of their custom?" asked Onesikritos. 'No, because we believe in eschewing all kinds of meat, whether of things dead or killed. The objection is all the stronger as regards human meat. But those people will at the same time never kill anything alive or eat any meat. So it is with them a kind of sacrifice, though I daresay it was originally merely a custom" said Dandiswami. "There was yet another funny race in the Kaukasos which believed in having marital relations in public and in the daylight. Do you approve of that?" asked Onesikritos. "There is nothing to be condemned morally in that, since everybody knows that such relations do exist, and their frequency may become less, and lust decrease, by our insisting on having them in daylight and in public. But we don't approve of such a custom, because we hold that, like meditation and prayer, this solemn act for bringing a new being into existence should be done in strict privacy."

"I too agree. Do you do nothing except meditate?" asked Onesikritos. "We often go into the city and disperse ourselves in the market places, and discourse on the truths of our religion. Every house, wealthy or poor is open to us, and every part of it, including the women's apartments. We discourse with the inmates and share their food" said Dandiswami. "Do you not feel any curiosity to discourse with Alexander? Is there nothing which you would like to ask him?" "No. The only question which I should perhaps like to ask him is why he has undertaken so long a journey" said Dandiswami. "It will amuse him to know that just as he was amused by the reply of Diogenes. Alexander saw Diogenes seated in a big earthen cask in the streets of Corinth in the sunlight. Peeping over the cask, Alexander asked him 'Can I do anything for you?' 'Yes' came the reply 'move away, and don't obstruct the sunlight.' Alexander

then exclaimed 'If I were not Alexander, I should like to be Diogenes.'" "Why does he prefer to remain as Alexander?" asked Dandiswami. "Because it has been prophesied that he will conquer the whole world and that nobody will conquer him" replied Onesikritos. "Something will conquer him" said Dandiswami. "What?" "Time. All of us are the slaves of Time, which triumphs over us at last." "What is your idea of Time? Is it absolutely uncontrolled and uncontrollable?" asked Onesikritos. "Has it no master?" In answer to this, Dandiswami called two of his youngest disciples and asked them to recite the poem "The Wheel of Time." They then recited the poem which ran: –

THE WHEEL OF TIME

Life is ebbing, life is flowing,
Things are coming, things are going,
States are falling, states are rising,
Creeds are springing, creeds are dying.
The wheel of Time, the wheel of Time,
It turns and turns to cosmic rhyme.

Days, nights, months, years, they come and go,
The sun of man it sinks below,
All life, men and mice, friend and foe
Alike they leave this world of woe.
The wheel of Time, the wheel of Time,
It whirls and turns to cosmic rhyme.

The common man and woman see
Nothing except Diversity,
They never pause to think and see
That Truth is uniformity.
The wheel of Time, the wheel of Time,
It sighs and turns to cosmic rhyme.

Vast worlds are born, vast worlds decay,
Their cosmic secret none can say.
Driblets of knowledge reach our mind,
Its final source we cannot find.
The wheel of Time, the wheel of Time,
It laughs and turns to cosmic rhyme.

The holy sage, he cannot see
The stars and planets correctly,
But sees the Living God all round
By Love to his Creation bound.
The wheel of Time, the wheel of Time,
It smiles and turns to cosmic rhyme.

His the fire that warms but does not burn,
His the mind that acts but does not yearn,
His the heart that loves but does not lust,
His the faith that burns but does not crust.
The wheel of Time, the wheel of Time,
It sings and turns to cosmic rhyme.

Oh wheel, have you a master got,
Who never man in need forgot,
Who turns you on and makes you hot,
Wheel of Destiny and Man's Lot ?
The wheel of Time, the wheel of Time,
It turns and speaks to cosmic rhyme.

'Hark ! God, the King of Kings, the great grandsire,
The master magician, the dread umpire,
The abode of peace, the sure hope of man,
Is lord of Time and all its wheel and span.
The wheel of Time, the wheel of Time,
It speaks and turns to cosmic rhyme.

As the poem was nearing its end, Dandiswami went into a deep samadhi[3]. Onesikritos was astonished at the unusual phenomenon and tried to speak to him. But Kalanos said to him, "Don't disturb him now. He will be in this trance for an hour. If you like to have any more discussion with me, you are welcome."

Onesikritos then went back to Kalanos. He said, "You sages are just wonderful. We have nothing like this at home. Oh, you must come to Alexander and tell him about all this." He tempted Kalanos with a description of the many delicious meats and wines at Alexander's table and the many presents he would get from the King if only he went to him. "He has heard of your fame," said he, "and is longing to see you. Why do you waste yourself in such useless suffering when even your Guru called your pride in nakedness sheer insolence? Come with me and taste the dinner at our king's table and hear him talk, and then decide. You live here where your wisdom is not at all appreciated. You can live there and be the object of admiration of a brilliant court." Seeing Kalanos waver, Onesikritos said, "Try it for a day or two and then return if you do not like it. Truth must prevail with you more than mere custom or routine." "All right," said Kalanos, "I shall come. A month ago I finished my vow of abstinence for forty years, and so cannot be accused of breaking my oath." Then, in the evening, he went with Onesikritos to Alexander's camp instead of going to his humble almshouse in the city.

Alexander received him right royally and feasted him on all kinds of rich meats and wines. Kalanos ate and drank with an appetite, and delighted one and all with his conversation, Alexander took to him at once and said to

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3. trance.

him, "You are, from now on, my friend. I cannot allow you to go back. Grace my table as my honoured guest. Combine the wisdom of your race and ours, and both of us shall profit." "Very well," said Kalanos. "I do so the more readily because I find that I like the new food and surroundings all the better, and it would be sheer hypocrisy to pretend that I prefer the old food and want to revert to the old ways. Dandiswami has condemned all hypocrisy as unworthy of a holy man who should be a strict votary of Truth. I think that this environment suits me better and that I shall be even spiritually better by remaining with you and going round with you to the strange countries and spreading a knowledge of our philosophy there." Alexander embraced him in joy and said, "You shall have no cause to repent your decision. I shall never go counter to your settled wishes."

Three days after this, when Alexander was riding in the meadow outside the city he again met some Brahmins. He said to them through an interpreter, "Your leader Kalanos has come to me and has forsaken all the old superstitions. He now dresses himself in rich robes, eats all kinds of meats, drinks choice wines, and enjoys life like the best of us. So, Dandiswami and the other thirteen of you also had better come and join our camp, shaking off your age-old customs." "You are greatly mistaken, oh king, in thinking that all Brahmins are so changeable and devoid of self-control as Kalanos. Kalanos is despised and trodden upon by us and has been contemptuously cast out by us as worthless. Everything which we trample under foot is an object of admiration now to the lucre-loving Kalanos, your worthless friend, but he is no friend of ours. He is a miserable creature more to be pitied than the unhappiest wretch, for, by abandoning the fruits of the penance of forty years and setting his heart on wealth he has wrought the perdition of

his soul. He is neither worthy of us nor worthy of the friendship of God, and hence he was not content to pass his life peacefully in the woods beyond the reach of care; nor was he cheered with the hope of a blessed Hereafter. By his love of money he has slain the very life of his miserable soul. Utterly lacking in self-control, he has left the happiness he enjoyed among us who are meditating on God in the forest, and has gone to serve another master than God" said the leader of the Brahmins. "But, don't you know that I am the son of Zeus, and that in coming to serve me he has not ceased to serve God?" asked Alexander. "Besides, is there one among you who will not rather be with Alexander, if he wants him, than take the consequences of disobeying his commands?" "Oh, king," replied the leader of the Brahmins "there is among us still the great Dandiswami who will disdain to answer your summons and will take the consequences. His home is the wood, his bed a pallet of leaves, his food the fruits of the forest, his drink fresh water. He has found peace and is indeed a god among men." "This man shall I fetch to my camp to-day" said Alexander, "and you shall see him dine with me and Kalanos this night out of the choicest meats and wines." "You do not know what you are talking about, oh king. If you succeed in doing what you say you can do, you are indeed the son of God" said they, and went away stamping on the ground as they went.

Alexander rode at once to the wood to see what kind of man this Dandiswami was. He did not find him there. Some of the Brahmins there told him, "Sir, he has not returned yet. If you wait, you can see him." "Alexander waits for no man," he replied "he shall come to my camp presently." "Sir, you do not know Dandiswami" the Brahmins replied, "he will not care for your favours, nor fear your threats." "We shall see," said Alexander, and

returned to his camp. He sent Onesikritos at once to the wood to fetch Dandiswami to him on pain of instant death in case of refusal.

Onesikritos went to Dandiswami and found him lying down naked on some leaves in the hot sun and meditating with a serene countenance. Approaching him he said, "Hail to thee, teacher of the Brahmins! The son of the mighty God Zeus, King Alexander, who is the sovereign lord of the human race, has ordered you to hasten to him. If you comply with his order, he will reward you with great and splendid gifts. But, if you refuse, he will cut off your head as a punishment for your contempt of him." Dandiswami heard all this to the end with a complacent smile. When he had finished, he returned this scornful answer without even so much as lifting his head from his couch of leaves. "God the supreme king, is never the author of insolent wrong, but is the Creator of light, of peace, of life, of water, of the body of man, and of souls, which he receives when death sets them free if they have not been in any way affected by evil desires. He will do injury to no one but restore again the light of life to those who have departed. He alone is the God of my homage. He abhors slaughter and instigates no wars. Further, Alexander is not God since he must taste of death. And how can such as he be the world's master when he has not yet conquered the three worlds, and has not yet seated himself on the throne of universal dominion? Moreover, Alexander has not even entered heaven in his living body. Nor does he know the course of the sun through the central regions of the earth. The nations on the boundaries of the world have not so much as heard his name. If his present dominions are not broad enough to satisfy his mad lust for conquest, let him cross the Ganges, and he will find a region broad enough to satisfy his greed. Know

this, however, that what Alexander offers me, the gifts he promises me, are all utterly worthless for me. The things which I prize, and find of real use and worth, are these leaves which are my house, these herbs which supply me with daily food, and this stream which gives me water. All other possessions and things, amassed with great labour and care, only prove ruinous to those who amass them and cause only sorrow and vexation with which every mortal is already more than fully provided. As for me, I lie upon the forest leaves and close my eyes in tranquil slumber, having nothing to guard or worry about. Had I gold to guard, that would have banished sleep. The earth supplies me with everything, as a mother supplies her child with milk. I go wherever I please, and there are no cares with which I am forced to cumber myself against my will. Wherever I wish to go, I go, and wherever I do not wish to be, no necessity or care can force me to go. I am as much the son of Zeus as Alexander. I want nothing that is Alexander's. I am well off in my present circumstances, whereas I see those with Alexander wandering over sea and land for no good, without even coming to the end of their wanderings. I covet nothing that Alexander can give. Nor do I fear anything that Alexander can do to me. If I live, India would suffice for me, yielding me her fruits in due season. If I die, I would simply be delivered of this ill-assorted companion, the body. If Alexander cut off my head, he cannot destroy my soul. My head alone will remain here, silent. My soul will go away to its Master leaving the body like a torn garment upon the earth whence also it was taken. Becoming a spirit, I shall ascend to God, who has encased us in flesh and left us upon the earth to see whether, when here below, we shall live obedient to His ordinances. He will require of us, when we depart hence to his presence, an account of our life, since he is the judge of

all proud wrong-doing. For, the groans of the oppressed become the punishments of the oppressors when taken notice of by God. Go then and tell Alexander this :—' Dandiswami has no need of aught that is yours, and therefore will not come to you, but if you want anything from Dandiswami, even if it be his head, go you to him."

Alexander, on receiving from Onesikritos an account of his interview, felt a stronger desire than ever to see Dandiswami who, though old and naked, was the only antagonist in whom he, the conqueror of many nations, had found more than his match. He sent Onesikritos away, and called Kalanos and told him the whole story. " He too is a conqueror," said he, " though he has conquered other enemies. It is not meet that I should offer violence to him, especially when it is certain to have no effect on him. I am glad that there is a man of that indomitable spirit. A religion which can produce such men must have sterling merit in it and must be enforcing a spiritual discipline as rigid as that in our Macedonian phalanx." " Sir, you are as much interested in matters religious as in matters relating to war" said Kalanos. " No, I am far more interested in religion than in military affairs, which I know as well as any man alive and so do not feel that same burning curiosity regarding them as I do about matters religious, where I feel the fascination of the mysterious and the unknown and an overpowering desire to delve deeper and deeper" said Alexander. " Verily, you are a Dandiswami in action, and he is an Alexander in meditation" said Kalanos. " You represent different types, you the Hellenic type of simple emotions and untiring physical energy, and he the Hindu type of complex emotions and untiring mental energy. Both are unafraid of death, both are great adventurers. Your passion is to conquer the world, and his to conquer

the other world." "What a pity then that we are never destined to meet and exchange our ideas! Still I have you, and ought not to complain" said Alexander.

CHAPTER XI

PROFESSORS MEET

A week after Dandiswami's final refusal, Alexander, Ptolemy, Eumenes, Hephaistion, Critobulus, Critodemos, Archelaos and Demades paid a visit to the University of Takshasila and had a discussion with the savants there. Omphis took Alexander and his party round to the various departments. First they visited the department of Medicine. Here, Kritodemos and Critobulus, the Greek physicians, and Ptolemy were greatly interested in the Indian system of medicine and surgery. "We call our system Ayurveda or the Science of Longevity" said the chief professor. "We have two branches, medicine proper and veterinary science, and again medicine and surgery. We have special treatises about the diseases of elephants, horses, cows and parrots, In medicine we use potions, lotions, powders ointments and plasters. There are many potent herbs in the country. Most are capable of keeping health in full vigour, some are specifics for particular ailments like fever, worms, snake-bite etc., and some are supposed to restore even the dead to life." "Have you seen the dead restored to life?" asked Alexander. "Not by medicine" was the reply. "Have you seen it done by any other means?"

"Yes, I have seen dead birds revived for a brief period by solar rays applied by expert Yogis." "Can all snake-bites be cured?" "Not all. We divide them into two classes, vital bites and fatal bites. Vital bites can be cured, but not fatal bites." "Can you distinguish them at once?" "No, only after treatment. Where we fail, we know that it is a fatal bite." "Is that not arguing from results? How can you call that scientific?" asked Alexander. "Medicine is still in an empirical stage" replied the professor. "Do you really believe that the sun's rays are capable of restoring the dead to life?" asked Alexander. "I shouldn't be surprised. We Hindus believe in the immense value of earth, water, air, fire and solar energy for health. See this *Dhanvantari Tailam*. It has been reduced to five spoonfuls from a hundred spoonfuls by keeping it in the sun. This has been done a hundred and eight times over, the reduced quantity being diluted with water again to become a hundred spoonfuls and reduced once more to five spoonfuls, and so on. So it has imprisoned life-giving sunlight like a ripe fruit. Take this Deodar heart-wood. Its oil will all evaporate if we try to distil it in the ordinary way. So we tie a rag dipped in gingili oil round a piece of Deodar heart-wood and set fire to it. Then the fire-like drops are gathered carefully in a vase. They have imprisoned the valuable oil." "Very interesting" said Ptolemy. "Do you use any minerals etc.?" "Yes, our powders are generally oxides of iron, mercury, copper etc. We also use diluted cobra poison." "Cobra poison to living men!" said Ptolemy. "Mercury is as deadly as cobra poison. Words too can be both deadly and sweet. The spade can till and also kill," replied the professor. "What surgical operations do you perform?" asked Critobulus. "We do amputations by arresting the bleeding by pressure;

perform operations in the abdomen and uterus; cure hernia, fistula and piles; set broken bones and dislocations; extract foreign substances; do an operation for curing neuralgia; and do lithotomy and rhinoplasty. Here are our surgical instruments," said the professor, and showed 127 surgical instruments, one of which was of such fineness as to split a hair longitudinally into two. "Wonderful," said Ptolemy. "Do you conduct any post-mortem examinations ?" "Yes, we consider it a *sine qua non* for the student of surgery. That is why we have the specialisation of medicine here on the frontiers of India. At Benares, and other interior places the Hindu sentiment will not tolerate the post-mortem examinations. Indeed, surgery itself is looked down upon, and a surgeon is supposed to be condemned to be childless." "What superstitions!" said Ptolemy. "Do you do any vivisection ? " "Oh, no. On men it will be too cruel. Even on animals the sentiment is too strong. But, of course, when killing animals for food or sacrifice we observe something just as we observe something when performing abdominal and obstetric operations." "Why not vivisect condemned criminals ? " asked Ptolemy. "The punishment prescribed in our laws does not include this added cruelty. And none of our kings can transgress the law. In some cases of treason the men are cut to pieces according to the law. But it is the low-caste executioners who do it, and not doctors. Nor do surgeons like to be present at such executions where the victims may be nobler men than the kings ordering the execution" replied the professor. "I have been very well impressed by your disquisition. We shall some day start a medical museum under the patronage of Alexander" said Ptolemy.

Then they were taken to the department of Literature. They heard the chanting of the Vedas, and wondered at the marvellous memory of the reciters. "We teach them from

the age of seven when the memory is strong and things heard stick on like words engraved on rock" said the professor. "The sounds too are very dignified, almost divine, like our own Greek" said Alexander. "God is Sound; He is the divine Word," said the professor, "and, of course, all languages reflect His glory." The visitors were impressed with the Indian Epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, which they were told by Omphis were the Indian *Odyssey* and the *Illiad*, and supplied the plots for many plays. They were also surprised at the facility with which teachers and students could compose verses on almost any subject.

Verses were composed and read by the students praising Alexander, Omphis, Ptolemy, Eumenes, Hephaistion, Critobulus and Critodemus. "Very grand," said Ptolemy, "but all are praised in the same hyperbolic strain. Things which could be said properly about Alexander, the son of Zeus, sound ludicrous when said of lesser men like us. You ought to learn to discriminate and to curb the luxuriance of words." The visitors were astonished at the scientific study of Grammar and the marvellous text-book of Panini. "We don't pay so much attention to Grammar" said Alexander. "I wonder that anybody will dare to talk at all in the face of these detailed rules." "We are among the greatest talkers of the world. So, that objection cannot be urged seriously," replied the professor.

They next passed on to the department of Mathematics, and were astonished at the great advance of Arithmetic and the immense calculations. "How can you calculate these ages, each of which comprises so many hundreds of thousands of years?" asked Ptolemy. "The seller of plantains and cocoanuts has to learn to count up to a large number, whereas the seller of elephants need only learn to count

up to ten. Even for our censuses, counting up to large numbers is essential," replied the professor. "Do you take regular censuses?" "Yes, not only of men but also of elephants, horses and cattle." In Geometry the visitors were interested in the knowledge about the properties of triangles and the proportions of the radius and circumference of circles. "In Egypt also they have got a great knowledge of Geometry," said Ptolemy, "Who is your greatest authority on the subject?" "The *Sulva Sutras* written five hundred years ago," replied the professor. "We have pyramids in Egypt. Have you any here?" asked Ptolemy. "No," said the professor. "Explain the things to us." Ptolemy explained in detail their shape and construction, and illustrated his theme with diagrams. "They will make excellent gateways to our temples," exclaimed the professor. "I am from the Chola country, Sir. I come from the banks of the Kaveri where mathematics flourishes best. I shall retire and settle down in my land, and induce the king there to reproduce these pyramids as gateways to the temples of our gods." "Good," said Ptolemy. "That will link up Egypt and India, a favourite idea of Alexander."

They then proceeded to the department of Astronomy. They learnt with wonder that the solar year was calculated to be 365 days 5 hours 50 minutes 35 seconds according to the Hindus. "When was this calculation done?" asked Ptolemy. "Centuries ago," said the professor. Ptolemy perused the calculation sheet. "You fellows are not mere dreamers, then," said he. "Some see outer realities, and some inner realities," was the reply. "Still, your knowledge of the stars is less comprehensive and accurate than ours," said Ptolemy. "Send us a book on your astronomy," said the professor. "I shall be ever so grateful." "I shall," said Ptolemy.

III

The party then went to the department of Painting and Sculpture. They saw some figures with many heads all in a row, some with many eyes all over the body, some with heads facing all the directions, and were bewildered. "What is the meaning of all this?" asked Alexander. "Why have you so many heads, eyes, and arms in your images and pictures?" "To show physical, mental or spiritual strength," replied the professor "In this demon, Ravana, the ten heads and twenty arms indicate his terrible physical strength. In this god, Indra, the thousand eyes indicate enormous wisdom derived from a thousand counsellors who act as eyes for him. In this god, Brahmâ, the four heads in different directions indicate spiritual strength, omnipresence and omniscience." "I see," said Alexander, "We are very familiar with the first idea in our many-headed hydras, but are not so familiar with the other two aspects. I should think, however, that mental and spiritual strength can be better shown in other ways. See, for instance, the head of the Buddha made by one of our Greeks when camping at Und. It is very meditative and graceful, whereas the same head here, modelled by an Indian, looks mysterious." The professor took the Greek sculpture, scrutinised it and said, "That is so. But, perhaps, Buddha himself had that depth of mystery. The Greek head impresses one more at first sight, but its deeper meaning is less than that of the other. Still, it is a fine thing well worth reproducing here. It is the product of a cult of joy, whereas ours is the product of a cult of mystery. You look to outer beauty and simplicity, we to inner meaning and complexity. But, all the same, this piece of Greek sculpture is a fine thing, quite unlike anything in India. We can start a Gandhara school of sculpture by copying it and adding to it some Indian elements. Please present it to us in honour of your visit." Alexander

gave it readily and was thanked profusely. As he left the hall, he was pleased to find the professor and a score of students crowding round the Greek sculpture and scrutinising it. "It is a joy to see such free, intimate and yet respectful relations between teacher and pupils" said Alexander to Ptolemy. "No wonder, Omphis avoids wars as far as possible so that this great centre of learning might not be destroyed in the resulting turmoil."

Next they went to the department of Music and saw the various Indian musical instruments, and also heard some playing and singing. "The strength of your music is its haunting melody. It is weak in harmony. Besides, it is too classical and rigid. The growth seems to be already arrested. We must some day combine Hellenic and Indian music, painting and sculpture," said Alexander.

The Spinning and Weaving section interested the Greeks very much. They saw the cotton cleaned, carded, spun and woven, with breathless interest. Omphis presented a fine piece of Gangetic muslin to Alexander and some nice souvenirs to the rest. A piece of Tibetan silk was given to Alexander. "I am glad you teach handicrafts also here," said Alexander. "No, Sir, the University does not teach them. It teaches only the theoretical sciences. These practical arts, as well as the dyeing, casting of iron, making swords, etc., are only taught by the caste-gilds, whose representatives I have assembled here for convenience, for you to see everything in one place," said Omphis. "What a pity!" said Ptolemy, "Why should not theory and practice be combined?"

Then the party was taken to the Dyeing section, and each member was presented with some beautifully dyed indigo stuff. Later on, they saw the Iron and Steel section, where Alexander was presented with a sword of the finest blade.

Archelaos, the geographer, asked for the Geography department. "It doesn't exist," said Omphis. "Good gracious!" said Archelaos. "You should start one at once. We have our pacers who measure distances accurately by pacing. It is even more important to know the actual distances in our world than to know about the planets and the stars, and the other world." He then showed Omphis and the Indian professors a map of the world according to the Greeks. The Indians were impressed. One of them said at last, "Our old books of wisdom mention several seas and continents." "Have you verified them?" asked Archelaos. "No," was the reply. "In geography nothing should be accepted without verification. Else, armies cannot march, ships cannot sail, and men cannot travel. Look at your belief that Mount Meros is higher than the Emodos. It is quite contrary to experience, and should not be believed in simply because the old books say so. Again, our map shows the ocean next to the Indian Parnassus. We now find it to be wrong, and shall correct it at once though Arisototle, one of our wisest men, holds this belief."

The last department visited was that of Philosophy. Here Alexander had brief discussions with the expounders of the various systems. "You are much stronger in philosophy than in geography," said he at last. "That is Nature's compensation," said Ptolemy. "Realism and imagination seem to exist in individuals and races in inverse proportions. Where realism is relatively weak, as with the Indians, the imagination is very powerful. Where realism is very powerful, as with the Phœnicians, the imagination is relatively weak." Then the party left the University, thanking Omphis and the professors heartily, and rejoicing inwardly at all that they had seen. "We too must start a great University in Egypt or Babylon," said Ptolemy to Alexander on their return journey. "Yes, when we have finished with our wars," said Alexander.

CHAPTER XII

THE BATTLE OF THE HYDASPES[1] AND AFTER

ALEXANDER gave his army a complete rest at Takshasila and cheered them up with equestrian and gymnastic contests. He appointed Philippos to advise Omphis on all foreign affairs and military matters. He also amused himself with seeing the various other interesting places, among which was the Marriage Mart. Here, all girls who could not secure husbands by private negotiation were seated in stalls. Any eligible suitor could, on application to their guardians or relatives, examine them thoroughly and satisfy himself that they were sound in mind and limb, and then marry them. "This is an informal medical and æsthetic examination," said Omphis who took Alexander and Ptolemy round. "Can I examine some of them," asked Ptolemy. "No, unless you have a *bona fide* intention of marrying them if found to be free from defects," said Omphis. "What happens when people who have examined them reject them?" asked Ptolemy. "They pay a gold or silver coin towards the dowry. Some girls marry on the dowry accumulated by such repeated rejections," said Omphis.

1. The Jhelum (*Vitasta* in Sanskrit).

A week after the visit to the Marriage Mart, Cleochares, who had been sent by Alexander to Poros to demand his submission and a tribute and to direct him to receive Alexander at the frontiers of his kingdom, came with his reply that he would render neither submission nor tribute, but would be happy to meet Alexander at the frontiers of his kingdom—at the head of his army. "All right," said Alexander. "He shall feel the weight of our arms."

Alexander began his preparations for the war with Poros with his usual foresight and thoroughness. He made Koinos take to pieces the bridge of boats at Und, and have the boats ready at the Hydaspes. He secured from Omphis detailed information about the terrain, besides 5,000 seasoned troops. He accustomed his soldiers to face Omphis's elephants in war formation. But he found that the horses could never be relied on to cross a river in the face of the elephants. He sent a cavalry regiment and cut the line of communications between Poros and Abhisara. Abhisara, finding himself thus isolated, sent his brother Pradyumna and his vassal Arsakes to Alexander with costly gifts, proffering submission. He excused himself from personal attendance on the ground of illness. Alexander saw through the evasion, but kept quiet for the time being, resolved to crush the man in due course. "Lions have to be killed before hyenas," he told Omphis, "and Poros, the Lion of the Punjab, must be conquered first."

The Greek army moved to the Hydaspes. Spatikesa, Vijayavarman, Vairochaka and Malayaketu, who hovered about and tried to stop the advance, were themselves forced to flee.

The Greeks camped on the western bank of the Hydaspes. They could see clearly the mighty army of Poros with the elephants in front, ranged on the other bank.

The river was swollen with the recent rains. "It will be madness to cross in the face of these elephants," said Alexander to Krateros. "We shall distract Poros's attention by sham movements of our troops, and then cross over." He made several regiments march up and down the bank day after day with war-cries and shouts. Poros and his elephants marched and countermarched on the other bank. Finally, Poros considered all these to be merely deceptive manœuvres, and paid little attention to them.

Then, on a stormy night, Alexander left Krateros and his regiment and Omphis's troops behind, asking them to make a big camp fire and raise huge shouts and war-cries, while he quietly crossed the river at a selected place with picked troops under Ptolemy, Seleukos, Koinos, Hephaistion, Perdikkas and Demetrios. The Indian scouts on the other bank could not hear any sound of the crossing, owing to the storm. Nor could they see the Greeks, owing to the darkness and a wooded island which intervened. But when the Greeks were nearing the bank at break of dawn, they saw them and galloped off to Poros with the news. Alexander saw the Indians go and said to Koinos, "Not a second is to be lost." He hurriedly disembarked and marshalled the army. But he found a shallow branch of the river still intervening between him and the mainland. Without a moment's hesitation he waded through it on Boukephalus, and the cavalry and infantry followed. The horses could scarcely keep their heads above the water, and the foot-soldiers had to wade through water breastdeep. Alexander exclaimed, "Oh Athenians, can you believe what dangers I undergo to earn your applause?" Finally, all crossed over safely.

Hardly had the army been again marshalled than Arjun, the son of Poros, attacked them with 2,000 horse and 120 chariots. Alexander with his much superior force had no

difficulty in defeating this army. The gallant prince rushed at Alexander himself and wounded Boukephalus with a view to unhorse Alexander and take him prisoner. He was killed by Koinos. His army broke and fled leaving 400 dead.

Poros heard of this disaster which befell his son. He advanced with the whole army to meet Alexander. He had 4,000 horse, 200 elephants, 300 chariots and 30,000 infantry under Malayaketu and his brothers and Spatikesa, Vijayavarman and Vairochaka. He stationed his elephants in front, the cavalry and chariots on the flanks, and the infantry behind the wall of elephants. Alexander did not dare to attack the centre as his horses would not face the elephants, and his phalanx was not superior to the infantry of Poros. But his cavalry was stronger. After causing confusion in the Indian cavalry by showers of arrows discharged by his mounted archers, he and Koinos attacked the Indian left wing from front and rear. The Indian horsemen changed their formation and faced both sides, but were beaten, and fled behind the wall of elephants. The Macedonians hurled their darts at the elephants and their riders. Some of the maddened beasts crashed through the Macedonian phalanx. Alexander directed the phalanx to open their ranks and allow the beasts to pass through, and then to kill or mutilate them at leisure. Thus he prevented much carnage.

The Indian cavalry charged again, but was driven back in confusion. They retired once more behind the wall of elephants. But the Macedonians showered thousands of missiles at the elephants, which fled backwards and crashed through Poros's own cavalry and infantry, causing terrible slaughter. Just at this moment Krateros and Omphis crossed over with the other army. Hemmed in between the two armies before they had yet recovered from the charge

of their own elephants, Poros's men broke and fled, but not before they had lost half their effective strength and two more sons of Poros and the valiant Spatikesa. Vairochaka, Vijayavarman and Malayaketu escaped.

Poros, a giant seven feet tall, fought on till the very last chance of resistance had gone, and then wheeled his elephant round for retreat. He had been wounded on the left shoulder, the only part of his body left unprotected by his shot-proof coat of mail which was remarkable for its strength and the closeness with which it fitted his person. Alexander had been tremendously impressed with his bravery and demeanour, and was anxious to save his life. So he sent Omphis on horseback to him to promise him his life and take him to him at once. Omphis galloped behind Poros, but was afraid to approach him too near, knowing his nature well. He entreated him to stop and listen to Alexander's message. Poros turned round, and hurled his javelin at him. Omphis just managed to gallop out of reach of the weapon and escape death. Even this act of Poros did not enrage Alexander. He again sent messenger after messenger to him asking him to meet him. Finally he sent Meroes,[2] Poros's old friend. Poros was overpowered with thirst when Meroes took Alexander's message to him. He dismounted from his elephant, drank a little water, and requested the messenger to take him to Alexander.

Alexander was filled with joy on hearing this. He rode forward with a few companions to meet Poros and Meroes. He watched with admiration the handsome and majestic stature of Poros. He also saw with wonder that the spirit of Poros was not abased or broken down by the defeat, and that he had come to meet him as one brave man another. He

2. Miresa.

asked Poros to say how he should be treated. Poros replied "Treat me, oh Alexander, as befits a king." "For my own sake, oh Poros, I would do that. Ask for any other boon you like," said Alexander. "All that I want is included in that request," said Poros. Alexander was immensely pleased with these replies, and allowed Poros not only to govern his own kingdom, but also promised to add to it as great a patch of territory from his future conquests. He founded a city, Nikaia, on the site of the battle, and another, Boukaphala, at the site of the landing where his horse Boukephalus had received its fatal wound from Arjun. In Boukephala was included the great summer palace of Poros, a vast pile of buildings. Krateros was directed to construct strong forts at both these places. After the customary sacrifices and contests to commemorate the victory, Alexander marched against the Kalakas or Kalachuryas, a republican tribe living between the upper courses of the Akesines and Hydaspes, overwhelmed them with his sudden attack, and added their territory to the dominions of Poros. "It is far easier to exact obedience to foreign rule from princes than from republican cities," said he to Hephaistion.

Alexander then effected a reconciliation between Poros and Omphis, and allowed Omphis to go back to Taxila and rule over his kingdom as a satrapy held from him. The younger Poros sent envoys with presents, and was made satrap of his dominions with Eudemos to advise him. Abhisara sent forty elephants and other presents with Arsakes and Pradyumna. "Ask Abhisara to come here in person as quickly as possible. Else, he will see me and my troops in his country," said Alexander to them. "These half-hearted submissions will not do." Just then an urgent messenger from Sasigupta went and told Alexander that the Asvakas had slain their governor and revolted. "What a

restless and turbulent people!" said Alexander. "They have been conquered only just now, and have revolted. Their revolt must be drowned in blood." He sent Philippos and Tyriaspes to crush the rebellion.

He then crossed the Akesines[3] with his army in boats. The current was swift and the crossing difficult, and scores of boats were dashed on the rocks causing hundreds of men to perish. On the other side of the river was a forest with very good timber for constructing ships. There were many deadly serpents gliding amidst the grass there. Their scales were golden in colour. They also spread their hoods. Two soldiers were bitten by them. The Greek doctors were unable to find any remedy. One of the soldiers died. But the other was cured by an Indian doctor who told Alexander that he had an antidote for every kind of snake poison. He would not reveal its name, but would only give it to those in need of it. Alexander found in this forest the famous banyan tree. "What is this tree with its roots up in the air and branches like so many pillars?" asked he in joy. "That is the famous Indian fig-tree, Sir," said the Indian doctor. "It is a holy tree, and, like holy men, has its roots in heaven." "Can we grow these trees in other countries?" asked Alexander. "No, Sir. Being a holy tree, it will grow only in India," said the doctor. "Nonsense," said the king.

Alexander and his men saw in this forest a rhinoceros. Many of them saw it for the first time. Its one horn in the middle of the forehead caused them wonder. The Indian doctor told them that it was called *Ganda*, but Alexander called it rhinoceros, to express the meaning better. He shot one of them, but it ran away with a couple of arrows sticking in its skin. "What a tough hide it has!" said

3. The Chenab; Asikni or the dark-coloured.

Alexander, "It is difficult to shoot and kill it." "It must be shot in the eye," said the Indian doctor. "Why didn't you tell me before?" asked Alexander. "I thought you knew it," replied the doctor. Alexander was greatly disappointed that he could not at least take the skin and horn of this animal to Macedon to show his mother.

News reached Alexander here that Poros Junior had thrown off his allegiance and revolted as soon as he reached the frontiers of his kingdom. Alexander began pursuing him in person, and crossed the Hydraotes[4]. Then he heard that the Kathaians of Sangala, who had formerly beaten off Poros and Abhisara combined, were concentrating at Sangala determined to offer a stout resistance. Poros Senior had impressed on him the tenacious fighting qualities of these tribesmen. So Alexander sent Hephaistion to pursue Poros Junior, sent Poros Senior to his capital to bring all his elephants and best fighting men, and advanced rapidly on Sangala.

4. The Ravi.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ADVANCE TO THE HYPHASIS[1]

CAPTURING Pimprama on the way, Alexander reached Sangala, the central fort of the Kathaians. The Kathaians had mustered in battle array on a low hill in front of the city. They were encamped behind three rows of waggons which provided them with a triple barricade. Alexander made his mounted archers shower their arrows on the defenders. He then advanced on them with cavalry. The Kathaians, instead of coming in front of the waggons and attacking the cavalry and archers, as Alexander had expected, mounted upon their front line of waggons and began to shoot their arrows and hurl their javelins and other missiles at the Greeks. Alexander then changed his tactics. He saw that this was no work for cavalry. He dismounted and led on foot the phalanx of infantry against them. The Kathaians were driven back from the first line of waggons, but retreated to the top of the second line of waggons, and shot their missiles with deadly effect. With great difficulty they were dislodged from the second row. Then they mounted the third row of waggons and fought on. Finally they were driven back from there too. They then fled into the city, and shut the gates before the Greeks could enter.

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1. The Beas.

Alexander besieged the city. There was a portion of the city without a wall, and with only a shallow lake adjoining it. Alexander expected the Kathaians to abandon the city during the night and to escape by way of the lake. So he kept the lake guarded. He also encompassed the city with two lines of stockades. Some deserters from the city told him that the Kathaians intended to escape that very night by way of the lake. So he posted Ptolemy with 3,000 men to keep a strict watch and sound an alarm as soon as the Kathaians were sighted. In the fourth watch of the night the Kathaians tried to escape, but were obstructed by the captured waggons placed there by Ptolemy, and five-hundred of them were slain. The rest were driven back into the city.

The next day Poros arrived bringing with him the remainder of the elephants and 5,000 choice Indian soldiers and military engines for capturing the fort. Sangala was stormed, its brick wall breached and scaled, and the town captured. 17,000 Kathaians were slaughtered, and 70,000 captured. 300 waggons and 500 horses were also taken.

Alexander then sent Eumenes with 320 horsemen to warn the other two cities of the Kathaians of the dreadful fate which awaited them also if they resisted, and to ask them to surrender at once. But the inmates of those cities had already heard of the terrible fate of Sangala and had abandoned their cities and fled. Alexander chased them, but could not catch them up. His army, however, slew the stragglers to the number of five-hundred. Angry at not being able to catch up the main body of the fugitives, Alexander returned to Sangala and razed it to the ground. He sent Poros to introduce garrisons into Pimprama and other cities which had submitted to him, and then proceeded towards the Hyphasis.

The people who had escaped from Sangala had spread the news of the invincible army of Alexander in all the surrounding places. "It is an army of gods or demons and not of mere men," said one who had escaped, to Saubhuti. "Such discipline, such courage, such pitiless destruction, such wholesale slaughter, can never be expected of mere men. Their leader too is fearless, undaunted and resourceful. The best thing is to surrender peacefully and thus escape total destruction." Saubhuti did not require further prompting. He did not want his rich and prosperous city to share the fate of Sangala. He consulted his ministers, and they agreed with him. "We have much gold. He has much iron," said they. "Let us give him some of the gold and thus prevent him from giving us some of his iron."

Alexander and his army were soon within view of the capital of Saubhuti. The imposing walls of the city stood eighteen feet high, and were in a perfect state of preservation. They looked almost impregnable. But, curiously enough, there was not a soldier on the battlements. The gates were twenty-four feet high, and wide enough to allow two elephants to go abreast. The doors were of the finest teak clinched with iron and brass bands, and were closed firmly, the only sign of an intention to resist. Alexander stopped his troops. Calling Koinos, he said, "I can't make out what exactly is the situation here. Is this town deserted? Or, are the warriors defending the battlements on an inner wall? Or, are they lying in ambush for us to take us by surprise? There is not a sign of life anywhere, but the silence speaks, and seems to be an organised silence." "I too think so," said Koinos. "If the city is deserted, the doors will not be shut so fast. On the other hand, if they intend to resist us, they will defend this fine and unscaleable wall. As regards an ambush, that ought to have been

organised before we approached so far. So, I am unable to make up my mind as to what the intention of these folk is."

"Nothing like caution," said Alexander. "After the fight we have seen at Sangala it will be rash to enter the enemy's den and fight with him on his own terms. Let us prepare for a regular siege. But, what is this? The gates have opened, and a gay procession is coming out, with shouts of welcome." So it was. The gates had opened, and a wonderful procession of nobles, chiefs, and soldiers headed by the King, Saubhuti, and his two sons, had emerged out of the gates with exclamations of the most cordial welcome. Saubhuti and his two sons went straight to Alexander. Saubhuti was tall and handsome. He was dressed in a royal robe which flowed down to his very feet and was all inwrought with gold and purple. His sandals were of gold, and were studded with precious stones, and even his arms and wrists were adorned with beautiful pearls. His ears had pendants of precious stones of inestimable value. His sceptre was made of gold and set with beryls. He delivered it to Alexander with an expression of his wish that it might bring him luck. Alexander accepted it as a token of his surrender of his kingdom, and was highly pleased. He had already heard from Poros glowing accounts of the wisdom, wealth and beauty of the people of Saubhuti's kingdom. Poros had told him, "In Saubhuti's realm there is a mountain[2] of pure salt, capable of supplying salt to all the people of the world for a million years. All children born in his kingdom are subjected to a medical examination, and the deformed ones are destroyed by administering a painless poison. Girls are chosen as brides simply for their beauty, and never for dowries. There are wonderful dogs, the progeny of lions, and bitches; they hunt lions, and will not

2. The famous Salt Range.

bark at the sight of their prey, or leave it once they catch hold of it." Alexander was anxious to see the dogs. He questioned Saubhuti about them.

Saubhuti then took him into the open space in front of the palace. He placed a large lion in a big enclosure, and let loose four of the dogs on it. They fastened on the lion with the greatest tenacity. One of Saubhuti's men tried to pull off a dog by one of its legs. The dog would not leave the lion. So the man cut the leg off, but still the dog kept hold of the lion. The man inflicted several more wounds on the dog, but could not succeed in making it leave the lion. Alexander loudly remonstrated at the cruelty to the dog, and his bodyguards rushed to stop the man from further cutting the dog. But Saubhuti said that he would give three dogs in the place of the one mutilated. The man went on mutilating the dog till it died, but it did not leave the body of the lion on which it finally died. Alexander and his comrades were astonished at the Spartan tenacity of the dogs. "What reward do they get for such wonderful loyalty?" asked Koinos. "They get their legs cut off," said Euemenes. "Alas, that is the fate of many a loyal man also." Saubhuti presented to Alexander six dogs of this famous breed, and also a complete coat of mail of pure gold set with gems. Alexander went away from the town extremely pleased with Saubhuti.

Hephaistion had meanwhile conquered many other cities, and joined Alexander who then advanced on the territories of Bhagela. Bhagela surrendered to the Greeks, and welcomed them as Saubhuti had done, and entertained them right royally for two days. He was allowed to retain his kingdom. He accompanied the Greeks to the banks of the Hyphasis, which was half a mile broad and 36 feet deep, and had a violent current which made the crossing difficult.

To questions put to him by Alexander, about the countries beyond, Bhagela said, "Beyond this river to the south lies a vast desert which it takes twelve days to traverse. To the east the desert gives place to fertile lands and the rivers Jumna and Ganges, beyond which lies the powerful kingdom of the *Prachyas*[3], ruled by the Nanda Chandramesa or Augrasena[4], who has got his army of 20,000 horse, 2,000 chariots, 4,000 elephants and 2,00,000 infantry massed at Indraprastha on the banks of the Jumna. They say that the roars of the assembled elephants are heard for miles." Alexander was incredulous about the numbers of the troops of the Nanda King. So he called Poros and questioned him about their accuracy. Poros too confirmed their accuracy but added, "The present King is a worthless man hated by his subjects and soldiers. His father, a comely barber, stole the queen's affections. Together they murdered the King treacherously. The barber became king. Now his son is king. The army, though otherwise formidable, need not be feared when fighting for such a worthless and unpopular king." "What about the rivers Jumna and Ganges? Are they really very wide and difficult to cross?" asked Alexander. "Undoubtedly," said Poros, "the Ganges is the widest river in India, and has its source in the Himalayas. It is of unfathomable depth, and has very swift currents." Alexander reflected for a while. The difficulties in his way of conquering the *Prachyas* appeared to be formidable. But he was buoyed up with the hope that he was destined to conquer the whole world, because the Pythian priestess had pronounced him invincible, and the priestess of Ammon had promised him the dominion of the whole world.

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3. Easterners, that is, people of Magadha.

4. That is, the son of Ugrasena or Mahapadma.

"After all," said he to Eumenes, "these Prachyas cannot be more formidable than Poros and the Kathaians combined. I think I can defeat them. Why should we fear to fight the son of a barber?"

CHAPTER XIV

TROOPS REFUSE TO CROSS

"WHAT is all this I hear about the secret assemblies of our soldiers to concert measures for refusing to march further?" asked Alexander of Hephaistion, Ptolemy and Eumenes in his tent on the banks of the Hyphasis one September morning in 326 B.C. "Do you think that the men are getting dispirited?" "I fear so," said Haphaistion. "Ever since Baghela told you that the Prachyas and the Gangaputras were assembled on the banks of the Jumna with 20,000 cavalry, 2,00,000 infantry, 2,000 chariots and 4,000 elephants, and Poros confirmed this and also spoke about the rapid currents of the rivers and their vast breadth and depth, our men have been greatly dispirited. 'Instead of the gold and precious stones of these barbarians being taken by us to Greece to enrich our country, as promised by Alexander, it is more likely that we shall leave our corpses behind in their country to manure their rice fields,' said an orator to crowds of men last night. 'Verily we have had a sea of troubles with the Aspasians, Asvakas, Madrakas, Poros and the Kathaians. Now the Asvakas are again in revolt, and even our passage back home is in danger. The opposition of our past enemies appears

to be but a flea-bite compared to the snake-bite of the Prachyas and Gangaputras awaiting us. Indeed, we have but conquered some of the city states and principalities of India; and have yet to contend with its Macedon, the kingdom of the Nandas with its phalanx of elephants. There must be a limit to our good fortune. We are sure to be overwhelmed between the hordes of the Nandas in front and the revolting nations in the rear, and will be cut off for ever from our homes and doomed to perish in this depressing land of pouring rain and naked fakirs. We yearn to see our land once more with its fair-coloured folk and civilised ways and familiar ideas. We must refuse to cross the Hyphasis lest we be dragged on to the Jumna and forced to cross it too from very shame of withdrawing in front of the enemy,' said he." "It is high time I address the officers and hearten them before the demoralisation spreads," said Alexander.

Accordingly he assembled all the officers at once and said to them, "Officers of the brigades, I have noticed of late that you have not been following me into dangers with your wonted alacrity, and that some of you seem to be unwilling to march further. So I have assembled you here in order that I may persuade you to go further willingly and cheerfully, or that you may persuade me to turn back. If you have reason to complain of your leader or of your past achievements, I need say nothing more. But I hope none of you will have reason to do so. You have conquered Ionia, Hellespont, the two Phrygias, Kappadokia, Paphlagonia, Lydia, Karia, Lykia, Pamphylia, Phoenikia, Egypt, Lybia, Arabia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Babylonia, Assyria, Sousiana, Persia, Media, Sogdiana and Bactria, and many other countries. You have conquered also the countries beyond the Kaspian gate and the Kaukasos and the

Hyrkanian sea, and have driven back the Skythians into their desert. And now, the Indus, Hydaspes, Akesines and Hydraotes flow through territories that are ours. Why should you hesitate to cross the Hyphasis and add the tribes beyond it to your conquest? Are you afraid that there are other barbarians who may successfully resist you yet, though of the barbarians we have met some have willingly submitted, others have been captured in flight, and yet others have left their deserted country to be distributed either among our allies or among those who have voluntarily submitted to us?

"For my part, I consider that there is no greater aim for a man of spirit than doing glorious deeds, be the result what they may. The whole joy lies in the effort, the striving. But, if you want to know the limit of my present aim, I may say that my intention in this campaign is to reach the river Ganges and the Eastern Sea, which are not very distant from here. As the great ocean flows round the whole earth, it is clear that the Eastern Sea, which we may call the Indian Gulf, must be connected with the Persian Gulf and that, in its turn, with the Hyrkanian sea and the Pillars of Herakles. So, we can sail from the Indian Gulf to Lybia, after having made the boundaries of the earth the boundaries of our Empire. If we turn back now, many warlike nations from the Hyphasis to the Eastern Sea, and many others lying northwards between these and Hyrkania, to say nothing of their neighbours, the Skythian tribes, will be left behind us unconquered. Then there will also be the fear that the conquered nations, already wavering in their fidelity, may be instigated to revolt by those who are still independent. Our many labours will then be wasted, or we must enter on a new round of difficulties and dangers. But, persevere, Oh Macedonians and allies, and glory will come to

you. Life, filled with deeds of valour, is delightful. So is death if we leave an immortal name behind. It is not by staying at home in Tiryns or Argos that Herakles, my ancestor, was exalted to such glory that, from being a man, he became a god. Even Dionysius had to undergo enormous toils though he was a god from the very outset. We have conquered Nysa like Dionysius. We have captured Aornos, which even Herakles could not take. Could we have achieved all these memorable deeds if we had merely confined ourselves to Macedonia and to repelling the attacks of Thracians, Illyrians and Triballians, or of the unfriendly Greeks? So, shake yourselves up and complete the conquest of Asia, adding the small bit left to the greatest part already conquered.

"If I had held behind while exposing you to dangers, or had denied you your share of the spoils of war, you may have reason to grumble. But, I have always shared in your dangers, and shared the spoils also with you. For, the land is yours, and you are its satraps. And among you the greater part of its treasures is already distributed. And when all Asia is subdued, then, by Heaven, I will not merely satisfy, but lavish gifts which will exceed every man's hopes and wishes. Such of you as wish to return home I shall send back, or myself lead back. But, those who remain here I shall make the objects of envy to those who go back. I want any of you who desires to speak on this matter to do so. Even those who want to turn back may say so openly, and try to persuade me to turn back."

There was a long silence. Nobody wanted to oppose their king openly. But there was no enthusiastic response. Alexander asked them in sorrow, "Where is the familiar shout, the wonted token of your alacrity? Where are the cheerful looks of my Macedonians? I do not recognise you

as my soldiers, and methinks I seem to be not recognised by you. I have all along been speaking to deaf ears. I have been appealing to hearts which are disloyal and crushed with craven fears." The Captains remained silent with downcast looks. Alexander continued, "I must inadvertently have given you some offence, because you do not even look at me. I am as if in a solitude. No one answers me. No one so much as says me nay. Is it to strangers that I am speaking? Am I claiming anything unreasonable? It is your glory and greatness that I want to assert. I want some of you to stand up and speak fearlessly what you think. Anything will be better than this silence."

Then rose Koinos, and spoke slowly. "Since you want to know the views of the army, I make bold, Oh King, to speak on behalf of the vast majority of our troops. Personally, I and other officers feel that we ought not to conceal the truth from you. My age and loyal service are a guarantee that I speak not from a desire for my safety, but simply in your own interests. The more I think of the number and magnitude of your exploits, the more does it seem to me to be expedient to put some limit to our toils and dangers. See how many thousand Macedonians and Greeks started with you, and how few are left! Many, like the Thessalians, have been sent away as unwilling followers. Many have been sent back wounded. Many have been settled unwillingly in the many cities you have founded in barbarian countries. Many have died in battle, many have perished from diseases. And, in what a miserable condition are those who survive! See how bloodless are our bodies, pierced with how many arrows and gashed with how many swords! Our weapons are now blunt, our armour quite worn out. Can you think of exposing such an army as this, naked and defenceless, to the mercy of savage beasts whose numbers, though purposely exaggerated by the

barbarians, must yet, as I can gather from the lying reports themselves, be very considerable. Our spirits are depressed by this pestiferous never-ceasing pouring rain, by these Indian clothes which we are forced to wear, owing to our clothes having worn out, by these strange and hostile surroundings. The days are blazing, the nights are eerie, and the jackals howl. All those whose parents are living have a yearning to see them. They have also a yearning to see their wives and children, a yearning to see their native land, a pardonable desire to go back wealthy and distinguished to the village from which they had come out poor and obscure. Seek not, Oh King, to lead men against their inclinations, for, you will not find them the same men in the face of dangers if they enter without heart into contests with the enemy. But do you also, if it corresponds with your wishes, return home with us, see your mother once more, settle the affairs of the Greeks and carry to the home of your fathers your great and numerous victories. Then, organise, if you wish, a fresh expedition against these tribes of eastern Indians. Other Macedonians and other Greeks will follow you, young men full of vigour instead of old men worn out with toils, men for whom war, from their inexperience of it, has no immediate terrors, men who would be eager to set out from hope of future rewards. They will also naturally follow you more readily on seeing that the companions of your former expeditions have returned home wealthy and raised to high distinction from their original obscurity. Moderation in the midst of success is, Oh King, the noblest of virtues. Though at the head of such an army you have nothing to fear from mortal foes, yet tempt not the gods too much, for their visitations cannot be foreseen or guarded against." This speech of Koinos was received with great applause by the assembled Captains, many of whom were in tears. Alexander was furious, and broke up the conference in anger.

The next day he again sent for the Captains and said, "Where are those whom but the other day I saw eagerly striving as to who should have the prerogative of receiving the person of their wounded king? I am being deserted, forsaken, betrayed into the hands of the enemy. But I shall still persist in going forward, even though I should march alone. Expose me, then, to the dangers of rivers, to the rage of elephants and to those nations whose very names fill you with terror. I shall not force any of the Macedonians to accompany me against their wishes. Those who want may return home, and tell their friends that they had returned and left their king in the midst of his enemies. I shall find men that will follow me though I be deserted by you. The Skythians, Bactrians, and Indians of the Punjab, once our foemen but now our soldiers, these will still be with me. Let me tell you, I had rather die than be a commander on sufferance. Begone, then, to your homes, boasting that you have forsaken your king. For my part, I shall either secure the victory of which you despair, or meet an honourable death in striving for it!" With these words, he withdrew to his tent, and did not allow anybody, even his companions, to see him till the third day, thinking that there would be a change in the mob mind of the army in his favour. But, there was no change. The soldiers were in deep sorrow at their having had to go against the cherished wishes of their beloved leader, but were adamant in their resolve not to proceed further. On the third day, Alexander realised that it was useless to expect a change of opinion. So, he offered sacrifices to the gods for the intended passage of the Hyphasis, and found the omens against the attempt. Calling his oldest companions and friends, he told them that he had resolved to go back. This news was received with wild shouts of joy and rejoicings and tears. "Only by us did you permit yourself to be vanquished," cried the Generals, Captains and soldiers in a delirium of joy.

The army was divided into twelve divisions. Twelve altars, 75 feet high, were erected there on a hill on the bank of the Hyphasis, as thanks-offerings to the gods who had led them victorious so far, and the place was named Alexander-giri[1]. In the centre of the altars was a column of bronze. Upon the altars were engraved the dedications, "To my father Ammon, to my brother Heracles. to Athena the wise, to Olympian Zeus, to the Cabiri of Samothrace, to the Indian Helios, and to my brother Appollo." Upon the column was the inscription, "Here Alexander halted." Alexander offered sacrifices on those altars with the customary rites. Equestrian and athletic contests were held. Alexander had quarters constructed for the infantrymen provided with beds 7½ feet long, and stalls of twice the ordinary size for each horseman. The idea was to leave among the people of the country tokens of mighty men to show what enormous bodily strength they possessed. Arsakes and Pradyumna came there again, bringing valuable presents and thirty elephants. They told Alexander that Abhisara was ill. Alexander accepted the story of the illness, confirmed Abhisara in his dominions, made Arsakes subordinate to Abhisara, and fixed Abhisara's tribute. He also made Poros the sovereign of all the lands between the Hydaspes and the Hyphasis. Then he went back to the Hydraotes. From there he went to the Akesines, and supervised the city which Hephaistion had built and fortified. He settled there the mercenaries who were unfit for further service, and such of the adjoining villagers as were willing. He then went to the banks of the Hydaspes, and made his army attend to the repairs of the damage caused to Nikaia and Boukephala by the rains. He also made arrangements for the necessary boats for sailing down the Indus, and for holding the Durbar

1. Alexander Hill.

for settling the affairs of the conquered Indian territories. At this time Memnon came to Boukephala from Thrace with 5,000 cavalry, 7,000 infantry and 25,000 suits of armour inlaid with silver and gold. Alexander said to him, "Had you come to the Hyphasis with these reinforcements, the soldiers might have consented to advance. But, the omens too were adverse." He then distributed the new armour to the troops.

Arsakes said to Pradyumna at Boukephala, "This Alexander is a dreamer, and deludes others and even himself. He has conveniently believed in Abhisara's illness, he has found omens against the crossing of the Hyphasis, he has made every foot-soldier of his a Poros in size by his faked beds, and now he has made all people believe that his motive in going down the Indus is to explore new routes, whereas his real reason is not to have once more such tough and profitless fighting with the Asvakas, Aspasians and others who are again in revolt and have closed the passes. Surely, his imagination is so strong that he has himself come to believe in his own myths."

CHAPTER XV

ALEXANDER AND CHANDRAGUPTA

WHEN Chandragupta and Chanakya and the four spies reached the Satadru[1], they heard many glowing accounts of the prowess of Alexander, and his freedom from racial or national pride, and his fine treatment of Omphis Poros, Saubhuti, and Bhagela. They also heard that he was camping with his formidable army on the banks of the Hyphasis ready to cross over and fight the Nandas. Chanakya said to Chandragupta, "He appears to be a greater man than I had thought. He is a more suitable person to be approached by us for help than the barbarous hill and forest tribes, or, the now powerless Poros and Kathaians. He has a great army and is anxious to overrun the whole world in a mad thirst for adventure, glory and booty, and will be glad of our help. He is also, from what we hear, a great general and organiser of victory. He has uprooted the mighty Persian Empire which seemed to be firmly rooted like a banyan tree. He has now promised his soldiers splendid booty from Magadha. You can satisfy his avarice by promising him ten, or even twenty, or twenty-five million gold *Panas* and large numbers of diamonds, pearls,

1. Sutlej.

rubies, sapphires and emeralds which he has been coveting, ever since he saw the gems which that fool Saubhuti always wears on his person." "What if he makes a request that I should recognise his suzerainty as in the case of Ambhi and Parvateswara ?" asked Chandragupta. "Tell him that it will be impossible for you to recognise him as Suzerain, and that if you do so the Nandas, who are now hated by the Magadhas, will become national heroes and the upholders of the nation's liberties, and you, the would-be liberator, would become a hated and despised traitor. "And quite rightly too," said Chandragupta. "My soul revolts at submitting to any man's suzerainty, least of all to a foreigner's. That is why I doubt the wisdom of seeking his help." "Let us seek his help only on our own terms," said Chanakya. "What is the harm in trying?" "I am only wondering whether it will not be dangerous to call in an ally of such great strength. He may prove too powerful for us to control or use. We should not repeat the story of the stupid frog which quarrelled with its cousin and called in the cobra, which came and swallowed both. I do not want Magadha to be conquered by a Yavana King who may finally treat us like his vassals. It is quite a different thing if we conquer Magadha with the aid of hill and forest tribes, who will never succeed in overshadowing us or looking down on our people." "Of course, there is that danger. But a wise man does not fear to use a razor, simply because it may cut him," said Chanakya. "There is no harm in trying to secure his help on a purely monetary basis. If he demands anything more than money for his help, you can always refuse." Chandragupta agreed.

When they reached the Hyphasis, they learnt that Alexander had retreated to the Hydaspes, his army having refused to march further on hearing the alarming reports of Bhagela and Poros about the numbers of the Nanda army,

and especially of the elephants. " What use is there in seeking his help now ?" asked Chandragupta. " His army may recover its courage and change its mind when he hears from you the real facts, the unpopularity of the king, the existence of excellent fords on the Jumna, Ganges and other rivers, the attachment of the Magadhan army and people to you, and your mastery of the terrain, and tells them. Indeed, he will now really value your help. There is no more danger of his asking you to recognise his suzerainty. So, send Siddharthaka at once with a message to Alexander asking for an interview, and with a message to Parvataka seeking his hospitality for a day or two. Parvataka will be very proud to have the future king of Magadha as guest. He is quite a nice man, though he has got puffed up of late, and calls himself Paurava, Parvateswara, and what not. The recent defeat must have taken off a bit of this conceit. Even Ambhi is not without his points. Though he apes the Yavanas, he wants to be honoured among the Aryas also, as his pretensions to be an Ambastha show. Besides, he is more anxious not to lose what he has got, than to secure other people's lands or treasures. He had great respect for my wisdom. He rejected my advice not to go and submit to Alexander at once, but to seek the aid of the Nanda king in the first instance, only because he feared that Alexander might destroy his city as he did Kusaḍhvaja and Kasyapapura. And, now, I think I was wrong in asking him to prefer the Nanda king to Alexander. But, then, I didn't dream that such a degeneracy had overtaken the King of Magadha." Siddharthaka was sent to Boukephala with the two messages.

After bathing in the Hyphasis and taking their food, Chandragupta and Chanakya and the other three went and had a look at the altars and bronze pillar set up by Alexander. The twelve great altars, each as high as a tower, stood in a

row on the river bank, six on each side of the burnished bronze column. "What fine structures these altars are!" said Chanakya. "What a pity that none of our sacred symbols are there!" He forthwith sent Samiddharthaka and got a local painter, and made him paint on the altars pictures of a cow, bull, eagle, peacock, lion, elephant, monkey, snake, lotus, banyan tree, *Dharmachakra* and *Svastika* in succession. Then all of them worshipped at the altars. "Is it permissible to convert other people's temples, sir?" asked Chandragupta. "Certainly, when there are no competing worshippers. A land must not be left untilled because the owner dies, a temple must not be left without worship because its devotees die. Gold jewels, when worn out, are melted and made into new jewels; doctrines, when worn out, are re-stated to express the new truths. Life must always be made to prevail over death, and no change is to be considered too great to serve such a desirable end. These Yavanacharyas have constructed these altars with great skill, and it will be a pity to leave them without worship, like tombs. They themselves will rejoice at our converting them into popular places of worship."

They reached Boukephala on the day before the grand Durbar. Siddharthaka met them along with one of Poros's ministers, and conducted them to the palace where Poros himself received Chandragupta and assigned him special quarters near the ladies' apartments. He told him also that Alexander would see him the next morning at 10 a.m., but hinted that the prospects of Alexander's marching to Pataliputra were not very bright, although he might try his chance, especially as Memnon had brought such strong reinforcements.

The next morning at nine, Princess Santavati was sitting with queen Swarnamayi, at the window of the inner

apartments of Poros; she slyly threw a jasmine flower into the court-yard below. Swarnamayi, however noticed this, and also her satisfied smile a second later, and went to the window and looked out, and saw Prince Chandragupta hurrying back to his room. "Santa," said she smiling, "So, your romance too has begun. He is a very handsome prince. There is no doubt about it. He looks also refined." Santavati blushed. "That black Brahmin with him, he is so different, and yet somehow fits in with him," said Swarnamayi. "Oh, I won't trust that Brahmin," said Santavati. "He is too deep for me. My uncle Poros says that he is one of the most dangerous men alive, and is also deeply versed in sorcery and magic." "Such a man can be very useful," said Swarnamayi. "I am more interested in him than in the prince." "Is it true that these two have come here to seek the aid of Alexander against the usurping Nandas?" asked Santavati. "Yes, your uncle himself told me so." "But, aunt, don't you think it is silly to expect others to win empires for you, as Prince Chandragupta seems to do? If they can win them, they will win them for themselves and not for others." "Go and tell Chandra about it." "I may, when I get the chance." "At this rate, the chance will come soon." "You yourself told me yesterday that he would not be a bad match for any princess." "I still think so. But it is your father, the king of Simhapura[2] who has to arrange your marriage. There will be hundreds of princes seeking your hand and the kingdom which goes along with it." "I hate the idea of any one's marrying me for the sake of the kingdom. I shall marry only the man of my choice." "All right. Go and put a garland round Chandra's neck then, and give him the advice you gave just now." Santa blushed again. "Aunt," said she, "How I wish I could do so without

2. A town in Rajputana desert.

breaking all your proprieties." But, seriously, don't you agree with me about the futility of expecting others to win empires for you ? " " In general, yes. But there may be exceptions ; a king with a noble soul like Sivi, for instance." " Yes, but Alexander is not one of those," said Santa. " You don't like him, do you ? " asked Swarnamayi. " How can I ?" asked Santa. " Did he not kill my cousins ? " Swarnamayi's eyes filled with tears. She embraced Santa and said, " Darling, I forgot. You would have been my daughter-in-law had Arjun lived." Santa too shed tears. " Yours is a loving nature," said Swarnamayi. " I will die for those I love," said Santa. " So, young Chandra is safe enough here," said Swarnamayi. " Aunt, he is going now for the interview. Let us go to the room behind Alexander's audience-chamber and listen to the conversation between him and Alexander. Something within me tells me that the prince's proud spirit and Alexander's arrogance will clash. So, let us watch the fun," " Right," said Swarnamayi. " That will be quite interesting." Then they went to the room behind the audience-chamber and listened.

"Well, young man, what can I do for you ? '" asked Alexander of Chandragupta. Both were sitting in the audience-chamber of Poros's palace. Alexander looked gracious and patronising. Chandragupta looked embarassed and uncomfortable. " Tell me something about yourself. I am afraid that I am not well acquainted with the affairs of your part of the world," said Alexander. " The rulers of Magadha for a long time past have been the lordly Nandas, from whom I trace my descent. The present king and princes are, however, usurpers, the descendants of a vile barber, who seduced the lascivious queen of Maharaja Mahanandin, put the king and all the princes to death with the exception of my grand-father Maurya, and ascended the

throne under the title of *Mahapadma Nanda*. Maurya he spared as he was held to be harmless, being the son of a Maurya princess and considered unlikely to be made king by the people of Pataliputra. My grandfather too served Mahapadma, who was a great soldier and vigorous ruler, faithfully as commander-in-chief, and helped him to extend his dominions up to Nander on the Godavari in the south, Jumna in the west, Gouhati and Kamakhya in the east, and Nepal in the north. But the mean sons of his tried to kill him and extirpate all his descendants and lieutenants on the advice of their minister Rakshasa. They shut us up in an underground chamber with one day's food for each, and Maurya and ninety-nine of his lieutenants killed themselves willingly in pursuance of a compact to let me live to avenge their deaths. I was the favourite grandson of Maurya, the son of his only son who had predeceased him. I lived on for some months in that dungeon and was released in order to solve a riddle and uphold Magadha's pride of learning against Simhala, whose king had sent a lion in an iron cage and wanted it to be let loose without opening the cage. I found its movements to be mechanical, concluded that it was of wax, applied a red-hot iron bar to it, and made it melt and flow out without opening the cage. I was highly praised then. But mean men soon forget their promises and also the services rendered to them. The king and princes tried to seize me suddenly and to put me to death after the mockery of a trial. But I have managed to escape from them.

"Well," said Alexander, "Your story is even more gruesome than the stories of the royal houses of Epirus and Macedon. What do you want me to do now?" 'I want to march on Pataliputra. I want your help to depose the Nandas and become king." "But don't you see that

we have turned back as the omens were unfavourable?" "That was a mistake. You could have easily faced the army of the present Nandas if you had my help." "My men were home-sick," said Alexander. "Perhaps they were also frightened at the rumours they heard about the numbers of the Nanda hosts, the rivers to be crossed and the distances to be traversed. There might have been good reasons for the fear if it were the old Nandas, or if my grandfather was the commander-in-chief, or even if Mahapadma were leading the army, or if you were not leading them. The Magadhan army consists of brave and tried men, and I saw their gallant show as I came along. They will strike terror into any persons not acquainted with the real state of things. But the present Nandas are hated by the people and by the army, who are sure to support me if I march against Pataliputra with a powerful army. So, I request you to resume your eastward march and help me with your troops. Your men too would have been encouraged greatly by the recent arrival of arms and reinforcements." "I shall have to think it over seriously with my generals. I suppose that Magadha will, in that case, take a Greek Satrap for advice on foreign affairs and military matters, and will also pay tribute like Omphis and Poros?" "Oh, no. That is impossible. There is no comparison between Omphis and Poros, petty kings of the Punjab, and the king of Magadha, the overlord of Ind. Besides, Takshasila was once subject to Persia, and is now subject to you as you have become the Emperor of Persia. Poros was defeated and conquered by you. But Magadha was never the vassal of Persia, and you never defeated and conquered her king. I shall pay you all your expenses and twenty-five million gold *Panas* to boot. But I will be independent, and my own master. I do not want any Satrap to curtail the liberties of Imperial Magadha and to earn for myself the well-merited curses of my people, who

would then regard me as a traitor and these usurping princes as patriots." "Then you should have gone to a leader of mercenaries, and not approached the Supreme Lord of Asia," said Alexander. "As for my not defeating Magadha, that is a trivial detail which can be supplied whenever I want. Of course, a prince without a kingdom or army cannot be fought and defeated, and cannot for that reason claim to be greater than Poros. I intend to conquer and unite the whole world under my sway. So, I have no use for the past history of Magadha any more than I had for the past history of the Persian Empire. It may interest you to know what I wrote to Darius, the Great King, when he presumed to write to me as to an equal. I sternly asked him not to write to me as to an equal, but as to the Supreme Lord of Asia and the master of all his possessions. I also told him, 'I need no money from you. Nor will I accept a part of the country in place of the whole, for all the country and all its treasure are already mine.' Surely you don't claim a higher status than the Great King." "I do. You defeated him, and so he had perforce to put up with all this. Among the Indians, a rightful heir to the throne, if kept out of his heritage by usurpers, goes and seeks the help of a brother king to regain his kingdom. He gets such help without being required to surrender his independence. As an equal from an equal he demands help, and gets it. He never dreams of becoming the vassal of the other. Nor does the other dream of demanding such vassalage. He considers it to be dishonourable to do so. I came to you like that for help, as I had heard that the Yavanas were like us in many respects. I see now that your Code in such matters is not as high as ours." "How dare you say that your Code is higher than ours?" roared Alexander, "how can it be?" "Because I find it to be so," said Chandragupta. "I shall now go to the savage Kiratas, Khonds and Savaras, and get their help on easier terms than

yours. They understand and follow our Code." "Do. Meanwhile, we shall march on Magadha and conquer it." "That is a vain dream. With me as your ally it may be easy to conquer Magadha. Without my aid it will be like attempting to cross the Himalayas with a pair of crutches." "We shall, in that case, take you with us as a hostage." "And violate your safe conduct and all rules of hospitality!" "Necessities of State often require deviation from ideal rules of conduct," replied Alexander. "I fear you not, Oh Alexander, or anything you can do to me. I am not pusillanimous like Darius. The descendant of Mandhata fears no man. So, you will never succeed in making me aid you in conquering Magadha. I shall die first." "Death may come earlier than you dream." "Death is more welcome to me than servitude. Do your worst," said Chandragupta. Alexander got into a rage, and called Hephaistion and Philippos and asked them to take Chandragupta at once to the private dungeon of Poros, and to keep him there till further orders. Chandragupta was caught unawares, and also deemed it inadvisable to resist then as it would have meant certain death. As he was taken away, he shouted out to Alexander, "Though the present Nandas are my enemies, I wish them a complete triumph over your barbarians. I pity Poros, Omphis and the other Indian Kings who follow you about and are your vassals. What a master have they got!"

"Take him away! He shall get a fitting sentence after the Durbar is over. Till then, keep him in the private dungeon without food or water," said Alexander.

Santavati and Swarnamayi had listened with wonder, admiration, indignation and dismay to every word of the conversation between Alexander and Chandragupta. "Ah," said Santa "He is as brave as I thought. I shall marry

none but him. This barbarous Yavana wants to break all the laws of war and hospitality, and to imprison and even kill a guest. And in our palace too! We must prevent this." "How?" asked Swarnamayi. "We are women. What can we do?" "What can't we do? Uncle is his slave, not we. You know there is a trap-door opening into the dungeon. I shall enter through it, and rescue the prince and send him to Chanakya who will be ready for all emergencies." "Darling, but will not Alexander find out the fraud in the evening after the Durbar? What will your uncle say then?". "Let him say what he will. We shall not allow such a shameful act of imprisonment and murder here. Alexander does not know of the existence of a trap-door." "It is a dangerous thing to do," said Swarnamayi, "Even your father will not approve of it". "He will surely approve of it," said Santa. "He never disapproves of anything that I do. My uncle will, of course, be put out. But I shall appeal to his better nature, and his anger will blow over. I must rescue the prince, or die. You are also a princess of *Simhapura*, 'the house of the lion.' Shall we become sheep to-day? Aunt, leave all that to me. Have two swift horses waiting outside with a messenger, and five other horses ready at the wood outside the city, and send word to Chanakya to go to the wood and wait for Chandragupta. Oh, my heart is trembling for the fate of the prince. I can't rest till I rescue him." "Santa, you rimind me of my maiden days. I felt as excited about your uncle then as you do about Chandragupta now. I shall certainly help, my dear. I hope he will marry you for thus saving his life." "Love demands no reward. Nor does it go a-begging," said Santavati, "If he loves me, as I hope he does, let him do so. Else, Santa will lose her peace of mind for ever, but will not breathe a word to anybody." Swarnamayi nodded proudly, and went in.

Chandragupta was taken by Hephaistion and Philippos, and a dozen Greek soldiers, and a dozen men of Poros, into the private dungeon. It was a room 24 feet by 24 feet, and had walls 24 feet high and 6 feet thick. There were only four slits two inches wide, two on each side, and nearly at the top. Chandragupta was put there, and the massive doors closed and locked behind him, leaving him in almost complete darkness and uncertain as to what was in store for him. He had been in the under-ground prison of the Nandas, and had passed through many a peril, and so took the imprisonment coolly. He did not give up hopes of rescue. He had implicit confidence in Chanakya's ability to meet any situation, and had seen from the audience-chamber Chanakya watching from outside and going away with that determined look which came on him when facing any desperate situation. "What a marvellous man!" said Chandragupta to himself. "And how fortunate that he is so attached to me! There is nothing too difficult for him to tackle. These stout walls can't keep him out." The heavy morning meal made him drowsy. When half asleep he was astounded to see a portion of the wall of his dungeon slowly revolving in the middle, causing that portion of the wall to stand edgewise leaving a free space on either side. And, yet, such had been the massive appearance of the wall before, that he could not have suspected such an arrangement. He concluded that Chanakya must be the author of this miracle, and said in a soft voice, "Reverend Sir, nothing is impossible for you." What was his astonishment when instead of Chanakya's form coming through the newly opened doorway, it was the fascinating form of Santavati. He wiped his eyes to make himself sure that he was not dreaming. Still the vision lingered. "Am I dreaming?" he muttered half-aloud. "Prince," said Santavati, "it is no dream. Seeing the shameful treatment

meted out to you, I resolved to come to your rescue. Whom were you addressing just now ?" "My preceptor Chanakya. I expected him to save me from this situation. I never dreamt that you would come to my rescue." "Are you sorry ?" asked she. "Oh, no, I am twice blessed," said he, "being relieved from two maladies. Ever since I saw you and read the message in your eyes, I knew that my heart was no longer mine. And, Oh Santa, here is the flower you dropped for me this morning." He took out the jasmine flower from his bosom and held it out. Santavati blushed deeply and said, "I liked your manly replies to Alexander. I like courage." "Then, I shall take courage to tell you Santa that I love you," said Chandragupta. "Become my wife and make me happy for ever." Santa stood silent. A tremor passed through her. She was about to faint when Chandragupta held her in his arms and said, "I marry you in the *Gandharva*[1] way allowed to us Kshatriyas," and kissed her, pressing her to his bosom. Santa's face was suffused with joy as she returned his embrace. Soon, recovering herself, she said, "First we must get out of this place. The workmen operating this hidden door are waiting to put it back into position. Come, let us go." "I should never have thought that this wall had an opening," said Chandragupta. "Nor did the barbarian Yavana think so. Thank God, there is an opening" said she.

So saying, she took Chandragupta to her room in the ladies' apartments, and the trap-door was closed. Swarnamayi met them in her room, and was told by Santavati about the *Gandharva* marriage. "Good luck to you both," said she. Turning to Chandragupta, she said, "Don't betray the trust reposed in you. Treat her always lovingly.' He promised to do so. Swarnamayi said to Santavati, "Keep

1. A love-marriage without any ceremonies.

the marriage a secret till it is formally celebrated. Now let the prince join the other five. I got a message just now from Chanakya that the five were waiting in the wood with the horses ready to start for Simhapura. So the prince had better put on the dress of one of our messengers and ride away. Chanakya is a very clever man. He was a classmate of your father's high priest, and feels no difficulty at all in having the marriage approved by your father. Indeed, he says that he will have it celebrated in a most romantic way. I am sending a letter to Vijayasimha with the messenger to-day, strongly, recommending the marriage. Your uncle too will send another letter in due course. So, you may not have to wait long before the marriage is formally celebrated. Have patience till then. Now, the prince had better change and go."

Chandragupta expressed his gratitude to Swarnamayi. He then gave a ring to Santavati in token of their secret marriage, and asked her to be in Simhapura soon. "I shall start even to-morrow," said she. Then Swarnamayi and Santavati left the room to enable Chandragupta to change into his new clothes. When they returned, they were astonished to see how very much like one of Poros's messengers he looked in his smart turn-out. "You are a quick-change artist, my lord," said Santavati admiringly, "I hope your heart changes less quickly than your appearance." "Indeed, the prince looks so much like our messengers that if you were caught making love to him now, your uncle would die of shame at the thought that his niece was making love to one of his humble messengers," said Swarnamayi. Santavati laughed. "Thank God he is a prince," said she, "If he were a messenger, I should love him still." Swarnamayi went in to fetch a small cloth-bag to put Chandragupta's clothes in. Taking that opportunity, Chandragupta took Santavati in his arms and bade her a tender farewell. "Here is the

bag," said Swarnamayi returning. Chandragupta put his clothes into the bag. Santavati dropped a scented handkerchief of Gangetic muslin. He quietly picked it up and put it in the bag. Then he mounted the horse held in readiness for him by a messenger of Poros waiting outside, and galloped off to join Chanakya's party. They soon joined the other five in the wood outside Boukephala. "So, you have got freedom and bondage at one and the same time," said Chanakya to Chandragupta smiling. "The bondage is even more welcome than the freedom," said Chandragupta. "A better match will be hard to find," agreed Chanakya. All the seven then proceeded in the direction of Simhapura led by Poros's guide who knew the route well.

On the ninth day after they started they were camping one afternoon in some tents in a desert in the outskirts of the kingdom of Simhapura. All of them were taking an afternoon siesta owing to the excessive heat. Chanakya opened his eyes to see a big lion close to Chandragupta. He rushed towards it suddenly, and it ran away. Chandragupta too woke up just then. Chanakya made political capital out of this episode. He woke up the entire party and told them that the lion was affectionately licking the body of Chandragupta when he woke up, and that it had then quietly walked away. He said that the incident was a sure sign that Chandragupta would become a great emperor, and that he would be the son-in-law of the king of Simhapura and would be reclining one day on the lion-emblemed throne of the Nandas in Suganga palace. Every one of them saw the retreating lion. The news of this marvellous event spread like wild-fire throughout the country, and Chandragupta became thereafter known as "The Man Born To Be A King."

When the king of Simhapura heard about the episode from Poros's messenger, who had seen the lion with his own

eyes, he readily agreed with the opinion expressed by Swarnamayi in her letter, handed to him by the messenger, that a fitter man than Chandragupta could not be found as Santavati's husband. He accommodated Chandragupta and Chanakya in a large palace in Simhapura. He became even more convinced of the fitness of the marriage after a talk with Chandragupta and Chanakya and his own palace priest. Chanakya suggested a *Swayamvara*, as he considered that a Kshatriya princess should choose her husband in that way. Vijayasimha readily agreed to this.

On the seventh day after the arrival of Chandragupta, Santavati arrived at Simhapura escorted by a party sent by Poros. Poros too had sent a letter strongly recommending the marriage. Santavati was highly tickled at the idea of the *Swayamvara*. "Nothing is more pleasing than a public expression of one's private choice," she wrote to Chandragupta secretly.

In due course, there was a grand *Swayamvara* at Simhapura. Princes and Chieftains from all over the Punjab, Malava, Sind, Kanauj, Saurashtra, Maharashtra and other places came in large numbers. They were all received and accommodated with pomp and ceremony.

The great event was celebrated on a Monday morning early in the month of *Pushya* (January, 325 B.C.). Even before the *Swayamvara* the other eighty-seven candidates had given up hopes of being selected in preference to the handsome Chandragupta of the Imperial House of Magadha, whom the desert lion had unmistakably proclaimed as the future emperor of Jambudvipa. The people were with one voice for this free, open, genial prince who was an expert rider, an unequalled archer, a rare controller of elephants and an unrivalled charioteer. Above all, his winsome smile and hearty laughter endeared him to one

and all. Even the Chiefs of the Kathaians and other Republican tribes who had taken refuge in Simhapura were so deeply impressed with Chandragupta that they promised to make him their king, if he would lead them against Alexander, a proposal to which he readily agreed. Chanakya took the opportunity of the assemblage of thousands of Brahmins from all over the Punjab and the Malava, Kshudraka, and Sindhu country to make them fanatical enemies of Alexander and great friends of Chandragupta. He exhorted them to see to it that everything was done to make the foreign invader feel as uncomfortable as possible. "Let him find no peace in our land. Encourage those who have revolted to persist in their revolt. Stir up those who have submitted to revolt again. Cause so much trouble to him that he will be glad to flee from our country. He is not invincible. Nor is he unafraid. His retreat from the *Vipasa*[2] is enough to show that a sufficient show of force will make him retreat from the *Sindhu*[3] too!" The Brahmins promised to do as desired. He gave them the "*Song of Freedom*" composed and sung by the heroic Malavas and Kshudrakas to serve as a war-cry against the Greeks who were about to invade their territory. He asked them to popularise the song among all the Indians down to the mouths of the Indus, and to organise resistance unto death.

On the appointed day, the eighty-eight Chiefs and Princes assembled in the great council-hall of Simhapura, which had been splendidly decorated for the occasion. Chandragupta was seated in the front row. Every one of the suitors would have voted for Chandragupta next to himself. Princess Santavati came to the hall, her

2. The Hyphasis or Beas.

3. Indus.

natural beauty enhanced by a charming *Saree* and suitable ornaments. They were astounded at the wonderful sight of innocent beauty personified. She did not keep them long in suspense. Going straight to Chandragupta, she put the garland round his neck, and touched his feet with her hands. The blare of the trumpets announced the choice of Santavati. Amidst loud applause, the Simhapura high priest said, "Among these stars she has chosen the moon on this Monday. Long live the couple!" "Long live King Chandragupta and Queen Santavati!" cried out the assembled people.

CHAPTER XVI

THE DURBAR AT BOUKEPHALA

THE pavilion of Alexander at Boukephala was gorgeous in the extreme. Bright streamers and buntings and flags waved gaily in the brilliant sunlight. Costly Persian carpets were spread on the floor. Settees and sofas of graceful and comfortable designs were set for the Princes and Ambassadors. Soldiers in shining armour of different kinds were standing all over the place. A magnificent throne had been set for Alexander. All his companions wore golden armour. Alexander himself wore armour made of pure gold and set with costly gems, presented by Saubhuti of the Salt Range. Among the Durbarees were Poros, Omphis, Saubhuti, Arsakes and Baghela, and the ambassadors of Abhisara, the Nyseans, Kathaians, Kalachuryas, etc., and all the Generals and Captains of the brigades.

Alexander was not in the best of moods when he came to the Durbar after his stormy interview with Chandragupta. But soon, he recovered his good spirits in the extremely laudatory atmosphere of the Durbar. Countless poems in Greek and Sanskrit and Prakrit were read by the authors themselves hailing him as the Son of Zeus, the Conqueror of the World, and the Unconquerable Hero. He was also crowned

with wreaths of pearls, diamonds and rubies, and garlands of flowers hung from his neck. Some Brahmin priests gave him consecrated pots of water, and waved lights in front of him. Alexander was delighted with all this, and was in an expansive and generous mood. He had also been highly pleased with Poros and Omphis, because of their hearty co-operation and steadfast loyalty. He called them to his side and confirmed them in the sovereignty of their dominions and of the territories recently added on to them. He had aleady advised these two erstwhile enemies to be reconciled, warning them of the common danger to their new dominions from the Aratti and the Asvakani. The appeal had fallen on fruitful ground. Now he announced their reconciliation and also the fact that this friendship was to be cemented by a matrimonial alliance, Omphis marrying a daughter of Poros's brother, Vairochaka. Loud applause greeted this announcement. Philippos, the Political agent attached to Omphis, and Peithon and Eudemos, the Political Agents attached to Poros, warmly congratulated Omphis and Poros on their alliance and new relationship.

Saubhuti, Arsakes, Abhisara and others were confirmed in the sovereignty of their principalities. Various honours, badges and rewards were conferred upon the Generals and Captains.

Then Alexander made a speech: "Oh Macedonians, allies and Princes, and peoples gathered in this magnificent assembly, I warmly return your greetings. This is a remarkable day when the West and the East have united on terms of amity and friendship under my sway. Do not be grieved that I have not advanced to the Ganges and the end of the world. I will return to India after giving the soldiers a brief holiday nearer home. It is sad that people should feel weary just before the last lap, should quit the game

when the goal is near. But I have to recognise human limitations, however free I might be from them. Well, if only you, my soldiers, had heard the words of that young Prince Chandragupta, how mean and hated the present ruler of the Prachyas and Gangaputras was, and how easy it would have been for us to have defeated him, you would not have insisted on turning back. But that Prince has a vile tongue. He uttered insolent words of defiance to me. I have therefore confined him in the private dungeon of Poros. He shall be brought here now. If he apologises and swears allegiance to me, he shall be forgiven. Else, he shall be sentenced to death for his insolence." There was loud applause and many expressions of admiration at the unmerited generosity thus extended to the graceless Prince. "Great men can afford to forgive and be generous," said Omphis, with a sidelong glance at Poros, who blushed.

Hephaistion and Philippos and the dozen soldiers who had consigned Chandragupta to the dungeon were ordered to produce him at the Durbar. [illegible] an hour, they came back in dismay, and reportedth at the prisoner had escaped though there were no signs of breaking out of the dungeon. This news caused a great sensation at the Durbar, especially among the Indians. Alexander was in a rage. "Bring his associate, that black Brahmin," said he to Philippos. "He shall either bring back Chandragupta, or himself meet with death." A wild search was made for Chanakya. He and his men too were found to have gone, leaving no trace behind. "That Brahmin is a magician," said Omphis to Alexander, "He must have let the Prince out of the dungeon by his black-magic, and escaped with him. He was in Takshasila before, and was renowned for his proficiency in the black-art." "I don't believe any such art exists," said Alexander. "This country is full of odd beliefs. But let us not spoil this

Durbar by worrying about the escape of this Princeling. Let the Durbar proceed." This was greeted with tremendous applause. The Durbar proceeded for an hour more, and broke up at 5 p.m., to meet again for a sumptuous banquet at night.

Poros returned to his palace. He took Swarnamayi and Santavati aside and said to them, "Prince Chandragupta could have escaped only through the secret passage opened by somebody with your knowledge. Speak the truth at once." "Yes," said Santavati. "I opened it, in order to allow our guest to escape unhurt, and our honour to remain untarnished." Poros was speechless with rage. "I have sworn to be faithful to Alexander. How can I hide this gross act of betrayal from him?" asked he. "Your immemorial loyalty to the traditions of your race, to protect your guest at all costs, must prevail over your new-born loyalty to Alexander," said his queen. "Or, hand me over to Alexander to be punished instead of Chandragupta," said Santavati. "I would love to die for his sake. Three of your sons, Oh King, died so that our race may live with honour: do you want to live so that our race may live in dishonour, prepetually subject to these barbarians? Alas, has the Lion of the Punjab become a circus lion dreading its keeper?" Poros sat down, stung to the quick. "Oh, that this girl should twit me thus after what I did by the banks of the *Vitasta*!" said he. His queen touched him affectionately on the shoulder and said, "Don't mind her, dearest. I know how brave you are. She spoke in a rage, and you should forgive her." Santavati too begged to be forgiven for hurting him to the quick, and then withdrew to her room. "I cannot understand these young people," said Poros. "Here is this girl from Simhapura ready to die for that strange young man from Pataliputra, more than a thousand miles away." "It is no wonder at all. He is no longer a stranger from a city more

than a thousand miles away. He is her lord and master," said Swarnamayi. "Is that true?" asked Poros astounded. "Yes. He married her according to the *Gandharva* rites in the private dungeon itself." "Well," said Poros, "quick work that! I wonder if Vijayasimha will approve of it." "She is leaving for Simhapura to-morrow with your letter supporting this match, of course not revealing that the marriage has already taken place. The bridegroom has left with my letter." I doubt whether I should give my support to it. Still the Prince comes of an imperial house of blue-blooded Kshatriyas, and has assuredly a future. That very clever Brahmin with him will also see that he becomes a King." "Here is a draft letter for your signature," said Swarnamayi. Poros took the letter, read it and signed it, and said, "These young people settle their own matches now-a-days. It was not so in our time." "But love is the same then and now. Forms change, the fundamental emotions are the same. Come to my room. We shall go and talk there alone," said Swarnamayi. Poros called Santavati, playfully pinched her cheek, asked her to behave herself thereafter, and went with Swarnamayi to her room.

CHAPTER XVII

FIRE AND SWORD

TALAJHANGA, the Governor of Malavakot, a young man of 25, impetuous, bold and reckless, returned to his town one fine evening in October 326 B.C. His mother Paulomi met and asked him: "How did the mission go?" "As directed by the Brahmin emissaries of Chanakya, we five leaders of the Malavas went and met five Kshudraka leaders and said to them, 'Just as in the *Mahabharata* war the Pandavas and Kauravas fought among themselves but were united against any third party, let us unite against these Yavanas whatever differences we have among ourselves.' They at once agreed, and, indeed, went further. The oldest among them said, 'Why not effect a lasting unity among our peoples? Nothing like marriages to effect that end. Kings often end feuds by marriages. Why shouldn't we Republicans do the same?' Every one of the ten agreed to the proposal. The old man at once produced lists of five-hundred youths and maidens from each of our tribes, and proposed a thousand intermarriages which were accepted with acclamation. I am to marry Rupamanjari, the daughter of the Kshudraka Governor Damodar." "She is reputed to be the fairest of the Kshudraka maidens, and is a fit bride for you, my son. When are the ceremonies to

come off ?" asked Paulomi. "Next Friday." "Ah, I must go and make the acquaintance of Rupamanjari and her relatives. Soon, I shall have a grandson," said Paulomi. "When is this Yavana expected to invade our country?" "We can expect him in six months. He cannot possibly be here before then. In another four months our armies will be ready," said Talajhanga.

An express messenger arrived at Talajhanga's house one midnight two months later. "Sir," said he, "Five Yavana armies have invaded the Malava country. One army under Alikasundara himself surprised our unarmed men working unsuspectingly in the fields of Kamalkot and killed some thousands, drove the rest into the fort, stormed it and killed two-thousand more. The men of Harappa, being unprepared for such a sudden attack, left the city and fled to the jungle, but were pursued by another Yavana army and butchered in hundreds. A third army attacked Tulamba, captured it, and enslaved its inhabitants. A fourth stormed Avatari Rampuri. Alikasundara also went to Avatari with his army. When further resistance was hopeless, our men set fire to their houses so that their women might not be captured. Then, with swords in their hands, they fell upon the Yavanas and fought on till they died. Five-thousand of them fell there." "How unlucky we are! We expected the Yavanas only two months hence, and they are already here!" said Talajhanga. "They came down the *Vitasta* from Boukephala in 2,000 boats, horses and all, troops in shining armour with drums beating and flags and banners waving. The tribes on the shore ran on both banks astounded at this rare sight. At the junctions of the *Vitasta* and *Asikni* the eddies and billows frightened the barbarians, and sank two of their boats and damaged many more. But Alikasundara got the damaged craft repaired,

directed the fleet to sail straight down to our frontiers, and divided the troops into five armies putting himself at the head of the choicest and most mobile divisions, and placing the remaining four armies under renowned Captains. The armies then attacked and defeated the Sibi, and sacked our cities as stated above. Alikasundara with his mobile troops goes to the aid of any of the other four armies requiring it. All the five armies are to meet again at the confluence of the *Asikni* and the *Airavati*." "We shall immediately go there," said Talajhanga, "and defeat each Yavana army, as it comes along, before it can join the rest." "My lord," said Rupamanjari, who had been listening to the conversation, "Our troops are not ready yet. Why not organise them and hold the Yavanas up here, instead of taking them to the *Airavati* junction and facing the risk?" "I shall leave you here to organise the army of defence. The people adore you, and will obey you as readily as they do me. I must go and surprise the Yavana armies just as they surprised us," said Talajhanga. "Their rapidity of movement is due to their being vagabonds at large without wives and children. Our soldiers are family-men with wives and children. So, they can never move so rapidly. Nor can they kill and destroy so ruthlessly," said Rupamanjari. "You are right to a certain extent," said Talajhanga. "But I see no future for our country till the family-men can defend their families against vagabonds." He took a tender farewell of Rupamanjari, and went with an army hastily levied. He left the better soldiers behind, to help Rupamanjari in the defence of the fort, should Alexander attack it in the interval.

Talajhanga reached the *Airavati* junction with his ill-equipped army, only to find Alexander already there. "The initiative is once more with the Yavana," he exclaimed as he found the Greeks attacking them in a fierce onslaught.

The Malavas fought bravely, but were defeated and driven back to Malavakot with the Greeks pursuing them. Rupamanjari saw from the fort-walls the defeated Malava army coming back, with the Greeks in hot pursuit. She opened the gates, let them in, and closed the gates before a single Greek could enter. Talajhanga told her, "Dearest, you were right. We were defeated. We could have stayed on and fought better here. We owe our lives to you." "Darling, what does it matter who saves whom, provided we are all saved? The Kshudrakas are not even as much prepared for war as we are. The marriage festivities were prolonged too much, and war-preparations delayed too long. Still, while a single man or woman is alive, the Yavana shall not take this fort. If we hold out for some three months, the Kshudrakas will be able to succour us," said Rupamanjari. "The great Malava armies have been taken by surprise and smashed. Kamalkot, Harappa, Tulamba and Avatari Rampuri captured and sacked! Only Malavakot remains," said Talajhanga sadly. "The Malava cities may go, if only the Malava spirit remains," said Rupamanjari, "Let us fight as recklessly as these Greeks and see the result. If only these invaders had come with their womenfolk I could have asked them why their men are coming to conquer and slaughter nations which never did the least injury to them. It may smack of cowardice for men to ask of men. It will only be commonsense if women ask of women. Now, I too shall don the uniform of a soldier and fight by your side."

Alexander soon arrived before the fort. After a steady bombardment with his siege-engines, the outer walls were breached. Alexander at the head of one army, and Perdikkas at the head of the other, rushed into the town. The Malavas took refuge in the citadel behind the inner wall. Alexander took a ladder from one of the men, placed it

against the wall, and began to ascend. Peukestas followed with the sacred Shield of Ilium. Leonnatus and Abreas were the next to follow. Alexander reached the coping, pushed some Malavas into the citadel, and killed some others with his sword. The Hypaspists, seeing him fight alone and anxious for his safety, pushed each other in their haste to climb up the ladder and broke it. Those who were mounting it also fell down.

Alexander was assailed by the Malavas on the adjacent towers ; men from within the city also threw darts at him. He saw that, if he remained where he was, he would be exposed to danger without being able to achieve anything noteworthy, but that if he leapt into the citadel he might paralyse the Indians with terror. So he leapt down from the wall into the citadel. Talajhanga at once attacked him boldly, but was no match for the veteran conqueror, and fell down dead transpierced with his sword. Alexander killed two others who had rushed to his aid. Rupamanjari took over the command of the Malavas. She made them stand at a distance and ply Alexander with all kinds of missiles. Peukestas, Abreas and Leonnatus also then leapt down into the citadel, and fought in front of the King. Abreas was shot dead with an arrow discharged by a Malava Captain. Alexander was struck by an arrow discharged by Rupamanjari herself. It pierced through his cuirass into his chest so deep, that blood gushed freely. The bleeding was such that he became faint and dizzy through loss of blood and collapsed on his shield. Peukestos bestrode him holding the sacred Shield of Ilium in front of him. Leonnatus repelled the side attacks. Both Peukestas and Leonnatus were severely wounded, and it seemed almost certain that Alexander would be captured or killed, when several Macedonians, anxious for the safety of their King, drove pegs

into the mud wall, climbed to the top, and jumped into the citadel, and several others broke the cross-bar of the gate and the whole army entered through the gate itself. Rupamanjari died fighting at the gate. The city was stormed. All the Indians, men, women and children, were massacred by the infuriated Greeks in revenge for the wounding of their King. Not one was spared.

Alexander was in a very low condition. It was doubtful whether he would survive. The first news that reached the camp was that Alexander had died of his wound. There was a loud lamentation, which soon gave place to despondency and anxiety for their own safety. The whole army was in a panic as to what would happen to them in the midst of so many unconquered and warlike nations, and so many nations which had only been nominally subdued and were sure to revolt the moment they heard that Alexander was dead. None of the rival Generals, with pretensions to be Commander-in-chief, seemed to have ability enough to take them back safe to their distant homes. The soldiers spent terrible days of anxiety and terror.

Meanwhile, Critobulus, the famous surgeon, Kritodemos of Kos, another surgeon, and Perdikkas consulted together about extracting the arrow-head from the wound. The surgeons were afraid lest the bleeding resulting from the extraction would be such that he might die. Alexander saw this hesitation and said to Critobulus, "Do it quickly. If I am destined to die, I shall die. Free me at least from the pain I am suffering by its still being in the body." Critobulus wanted some persons to hold Alexander, while he pulled out the arrow-head. It was essential that he should not move while it was being extracted. But

Alexander said, "Nobody need hold me. I shall be still. Come, extract it."

So Critobulus opened the wound, and took out the arrow. The King did not even wince. The bleeding was copious and continuous. Alexander swooned. No remedy was found to stop the bleeding. The doctors and Alexander's own Companions thought that he was dead, and broke into loud lamentations. But the King recovered consciousness an hour later, and was able to recognise those around him. All that night the army lay in arms around him. They would not leave him till he had fallen into a quiet slumber.

For seven days the King was under careful treatment. Seeing the panic in the army, and the rumour of his death gaining currency among the Indians, Alexander wrote a letter to his troops stating that he would soon go down to his camp. His own troops, however, were so sceptical about his recovery that they considered the letter to be a forgery by his Generals and Bodyguard.

To prevent all further uncertainty, Alexander had himself conveyed to the junction of the Akesines and Hydraotes, between the army commanded by Hephaistion and the fleet commanded by Nearchos. When his barge approached the fleet he ordered the awning to be removed from the poop, so that all might see him. Even then the soldiers were incredulous, and believed that they were but seeing Alexander's dead body until he neared the bank, when he raised his arm and stretched it towards the multitude. There was wild rejoicing. Many shed tears. Some Hypaspists carried him ashore on a litter. He called for a horse and mounted it. The whole army greeted him with loud acclamations. Then, he dismounted and walked among his men. A huge crowd surrounded him.

Some touched his hands, some his feet, some his raiment some garlanded him, some merely stood by and watched him with tears of joy. Krateros voiced forth the feelings of the army when he gently rebuked Alexander for taking such unnecessary personal risks, forgetting that on his life depended the lives of many thousands. "Under your conduct and command we have advanced so far that there is no one but you who can lead us back to our hearths and homes," said he. Ptolemy and others also addressed him in the same strain. Alexander told them, "I am sprung from a stock that prefers living for a while gloriously to living a long but inglorious life. Still, I must confess that my life has never been so dear to me as it is at present, and chiefly because I may enjoy your companionship." A Boetian soldier said, "O Alexander, it is for heroes to do great deeds." Alexander was very well pleased with him. For many more days, Alexander remained in the same camp till he was completely fit.

The Malavas and Kshudrakas were now hopeless of successful resistance for the time being, and sent their most eminent men with costly presents of fine chariots, bucklers, linen cloth, steel, crocodile-skins, amazingly big tortoise-shells, and some lions and tigers of extraordinary size. Alexander was highly pleased at the submission of these war-like tribes. He gave a grand banquet to their Ambassadors. A hundred gold couches were placed, and tapestry of gold and purple hung round. There was much feasting and drinking. The Macedonian boxer Horratus, flushed with wine, challenged the Athenian boxer Dionippus to a fight with any weapon he liked. Dionippus accepted the challenge, and prayed that Alexander should himself supervise the duel.

The next day, Horratus entered the arena armed with a sword, spear, shield and javelin. Dionippus had his body

oiled, and had only a club. Horratus hurled his javelin at Dionippus, who bent a little and avoided it, sprang on Horratus, broke his spear with a blow from his club, tripped him up by his heels, knocked him down, wrested his sword, planted his foot on his neck, and would have brained him with the club but for Alexander's intervention. The Macedonians, and even Alexander, were mortified at the victory of the Athenian over the Macedonian. At the banquet which succeeded, some of the Macedonians waited till Dionippus got thoroughly drunk, and hid a gold bowl under his seat. They then searched for it everywhere, stating that it had been stolen, and finally recovered it from under the seat of Dionippus. Unable to bear the shame of this false imputation, Dionippus wrote a letter to Alexander, and killed himself with his sword. Alexander was grieved at this, especially when he found out that the charge of theft was false. A Malava Ambassador said to those mean Macedonians, "Friends, your skins may be white, but your hearts are black."

The fleet then sailed down the river. The Ambasthas, the Kshatri and the Yaudheyas submitted on seeing the innumerable ships with the multi-coloured flags, and the armed cavalry and infantry and archers. Alexander made the confluence of the Akesines and the Indus the southern limit of the Satrapy of Philippos. He gave Philippos all the Thracian cavalry and as many foot-soldiers as were necessary for the defence of his Province. He also directed the founding of a city and dockyard at the confluence. He had the damaged vessels repaired there. He then appointed Peithon and Oxyartes the Satraps of the country from the confluence of the Indus and Akesines to the sea, even in anticipation of its conquest, jocularly remarking, "A farmer can dispose of next year's crops and fruits also."

Alexander then marched against Sambos or Sabbas,[1] the King of the mountainous tract west of the Indus. His capital was Sindhuvana or Saindhavavana, a strongly fortified town. Here he entrenched himself with his army. The army and citizens together numbered more than one-hundred-thousand souls. Sambos had stored ample provisions for a year, and had counted on the impregnability of the high walls. But, Alexander set his sappers and miners to work underneath the fort-walls, and had an underground passage constructed to the very centre of the city. Sambos and his people had never seen such mining, and stood terrified and unnerved when they saw Alexander and his army emerge out of the ground in the very centre of their city. Alexander fell upon them as they stood helpless, slaughtered 80,000 of them, and enslaved the rest. Sambos was terrified, and humbly submitted, and was confirmed in his own kingdom under the suzerainty of Alexander.

Mushikasena, the King of Upper Sind, reputed to be the wealthiest and wisest monarch in those regions, had not sent any ambassadors or presents. Alexander marched swiftly down the river into his dominions before he was ready. The dismayed Mushikasena met him with costly presents and tendered his submission. Alexander accepted it, and asked Krateros to fortify and garrison the citadel of Mushikasena's capital city Alaram or Alor[2].

Then he advanced against Asthikasena or Parthivasena[3] of Sindhuprastha, the uplands to the west of the Indus, as he too had failed to send ambassadors or presents. His city, Maha Urdha[4], was captured after a three day's siege, and

1. Sambhu or Sabhesa, both meaning Siva.

2. Means 'the gate'—of Sind.

3. Oxykanos or Partikanos of the Greeks. Means "Leader of believers" & "Leader of Kings."

4. Modern Mahorta—Means 'Very high.'

he and his soldiers slain. His citadel was demolished, and his people sold into slavery.

News now reached Alexander that Sambos had revolted at the instigation of the Brahmins, and also because his enemy Mushikasena had been confirmed in his kingdom by Alexander. "The Brahmins here seem to be bent upon vexing us to the utmost," said Alexander to Eumenes. "Ever since that black Brahmin escaped from Boukephala, the Brahmins seem to be in a ferment. Philippos says that his Indian informants attribute the whole mischief to that fellow and to that young man Chandragupta, whom those fools allowed to escape. It is a pity I didn't have those two put to death at once. The Brahmins seem to have little political influence in the lands of Omphis and Poros, but to have more of it in the Malava and Kshudraka country, and appear to be all in all here in Sind." "Just as in Chaldea or Egypt," replied Eumenes. "In all prosperous deltas, kings are rich, and priests powerful."

Alexander then advanced against Sindhuvana. Sambos had fled from there, surrendering his kingdom and treasure to his relatives, who opened the gates to the Greeks and surrendered the city. Alexander took the whole treasure and elephants, and then advanced against Brahmasthala, a city of the Brahmins. Though this was in the kingdom of Sambos, and Sambos's relatives had submitted, and Sambos himself had fled far to the west, these Brahmins refused to surrender the city. Many of the Captains of Sambos aided the Brahmins, who fought a big battle outside the city. Alexander defeated them. 600 of them were slain, and 1,000 captured and sold, and the rest driven back into the city. But, the Brahmins had smeared their swords and arrows with deadly cobra-poison, and, so, many of the wounded Greek soldiers died soon afterwards in terrible agony. The

Brahmins had expected Alexander to rush into the fray as at Malavakot, and to get wounded and die. Fortunately, Alexander was unhurt. But, his Companion and kinsman Ptolemy was wounded on the left shoulder with a poisoned sword. He was one of the bravest men in the army, and was also loved for his simple life, modesty and great generosity. Alexander and the whole army were full of anxiety for his safety. Alexander himself attended on the wounded man at night. A Brahmin then went to him and told him the name of a herb which, if administered to the wound, would cure it. In return, he prayed Alexander to spare the city which would submit the next day, and also to pretend that a serpent itself revealed the herb to him in a dream, stating that otherwise his friends would ostracise him for revealing the secret. Alexander promised to do as was required of him, revealed his sham dream the next morning, and procured and applied the drug. Ptolemy was cured as if by a miracle. Brahmasthala submitted to Alexander, seeing that poisoned arrows would be of no more avail against him. He accepted its submission, but had a dozen leading Brahmins hanged. He also sent Peithon in pursuit of Sambos and the Brahmins with him. "Hang on the nearest trees as many of them as you can catch," said he to Piethon, "but bring ten of the cleverest here for me to test their boasted learning before hanging them."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE CATECHISM OF THE BRAHMINS

PEITHON returned in a few days, "Sire," said he, "I have hanged eighteen gymnosophists who incited Sambos to revolt. They died with a wonderful calm befitting their reputation. I have brought here ten reputed to be the wisest. They are as naked as apes, and as cunning as a cartload of monkeys." "Ah," said Alexander, "You did well. I hope these Brahmins have learnt a lesson which they will never forget." Turning to the ten, he said, "You too will be hanged, like your brethren, after I have sampled your boasted wisdom. Choose the wisest among you to be the Judge, and I shall put my questions to the others. He who, according to the Judge chosen by you, gives the worst answer, shall die first, and the rest thereafter in the reverse order of the excellence of their replies." Nine of the ten at once promptly elected Vaijayanta as the wisest, and the fittest to be the Judge. "Oh, you have agreed so soon?" said Alexander, surprised. "Sir," said the Brahmins, 'it is as easy to judge of the learning of the learned as of the lustre of lights."

Then Alexander began putting his questions. "Which is the more numerous, the living or the dead?" he asked the

first. "The living, for the dead do not exist," said he. "Does the earth or the sea contain the largest creatures ?" asked Alexander of the second. "The earth," replied he, "for it includes the sea." "Which is the most cunning of all beasts ?" Alexander asked of the third. "That which man has not understood yet," said he, meaning man. "Why did you ask Sambos to revolt ? " he asked the fourth. "In order that he might live with honour or die with honour," replied he. "Which is older, night or day ?" Alexander asked of the fifth. "The night by one night, the day by one day," replied the Brahmin. "A strange answer," said Alexander. "Strange questions must needs have strange answers," was the reply. "What should a man do to be exceedingly beloved ?" Alexander asked of the sixth. "He must be very powerful, and yet must not make himself too much feared. A weak man is loved by none, and fear corrodes love," was the reply. "How can a man become a god ?" Alexander asked of the seventh. "By doing that which no man can do," was the reply. "Is life or death stronger ?" he asked of the eighth. "Life is stronger than death, because it supports so many miseries, and yet persists. Death supports nothing, and reduces everything to nothing," answered he. "How long do you think that a man should desire to live ?" he asked of the ninth. "Till death appears to him, on mature reflection, to be more desirable than life," was the reply.

Then Alexander said to the Judge, "Give your judgment." "Each has answered worse than all the rest," said Vaijayanta, intending to prevent the killing of any. "Then you shall die first for giving such a judgment," said Alexander. "Not so, unless you go back on your pledged word that he should die first who gave the worst answer, for you have not yet proved that my answer was the worst of the ten," replied

Vaijayanta. Alexander laughed, gave each of the ten Brahmins a talent of silver, and sent them away unscathed. They took the silver with alacrity and departed. "How do you explain, O Kalanos, these philosophers delighting in silver?" asked Alexander. "Sir," said Kalanos, "Even the pious soul cannot concentrate on God at meal time. It is to remedy this defect that our ancestors worship Food as God. So long as we don't sacrifice any of our principles, what harm is there in receiving gifts, especially from a Great King like you? Yours is the privilege of giving, and ours of receiving."

Peithon then came in and said, "Sire, we have brought that terrible woman Paulomi, the mother of the Governor who wanted to kill you." "Bring her in," said Alexander. Paulomi was ushered in. She stood there before Alexander clad in her plain *Saree*, and with her eyes devoid of the least trace of fear. "Woman," said Alexander, "did you say that I am not the Son of Zeus?" "I did," said she. "And why?" asked Alexander in anger. "The Son of God never gets pierced by an arrow, or stunned by a club. Nor does he swoon. Nor does he kill innocent women and children simply because of some Kshatriyas having defended their hearths and homes from wanton attack." "With your leave, I shall hang this wretched woman also for her insolence," said Peithon to Alexander. "Hang me. I don't want any differential treatment from my beloved son or daughter-in-law, or from my brothers and sisters whom you killed in hundreds. If I had been at Malavakot that day, you would have executed me along with the rest. Come, do it quickly." "Let her go," said Alexander. "The Son of Zeus can afford to ignore her. She has lost a son through us. My mother would have behaved just like her in such circumstances. Go, woman, and promise

to be quiet hereafter." "Oh, no. I can't promise that. No peace for me till my son's death is avenged, no peace for me till my husband's country is free," said she as she went out escorted by Peithon. "As if you could do it!" jeered Peithon. "Pack off, you gibbering hag." "Pooh! If one determined man can conquer us, cannot one determined woman set us free?" she said, and went out. "Will that woman be able to do anything?" asked Peithon of Kalanos, who had come out to watch her go. "No," said Kalanos. "Nothing can she do by herself." "Then, why does she boast like that?" asked Peithon. "All of us boast far more than we can perform. Even Alexander is no exception. And, with women, boasting is the very marrow of their existence," said Kalanos loudly. "Kalanos," said Alexander, overhearing this, "Do you think that I boast too much?" "Yes, Sire, especially in your cups. But, worry not. Strong natures overflow, like blackgram dough. Saints utter rhapsodies, and soldiers their megalomaniac pæans. I, Kalanos, boast of my wisdom. Perhaps all of it will flow out as foam before I realise my folly." "Have a drink, and don't grow melancholy and sad like Dandamis," said Alexander. And Alexander and Kalanos sat down and drank deep of the select wine reserved for the Son of Zeus.

"I like the company of wise men," said Alexander to Kalanos. "My teacher was Aristotle, the wisest man in Greece. My father gave me life, but Aristotle taught me how to live. Still, even Aristotle, with all his wisdom, had a settled prejudice against those who were not Hellenes. He considered them to be barbarians and to be altogether inferior. My acquaintance with the Persians and Indians has convinced me of his error. Dandiswami is as wise, in his own way, as Diogenes, Poros as brave as any King

in Hellas." "The belief in the superiority of one's own race, and the prejudice against foreigners are universal among all races and masses of men," said Kalanos, "It is only travel and experience and real education which must eradicate them. We in India consider ourselves to be Aryas, and all the rest to be Mlechchas or barbarians." "I dream of a day when men will be free from this stupid belief, and will judge all alike," said Alexander, "and I shall strive to take some steps to realize this great ideal as soon as I go back to Persia. Indians are too hide-bound by caste and custom, and my stay here is too short to permit of the experiment being tried here." "A great and worthy ideal, but centuries ahead of the times," said Kalanos.

CHAPTER XIX

THE HANGING OF A KING

THREE days after Alexander had sent away the ten Brahmins and Paulomi, he received news that Mushikasena was in revolt at the instance of the Brahmins. In a fury he called Peithon and said, "These Brahmins are becoming intolerable. They are the most fanatical men on earth, though they conceal this by a lot of subtlety. They wield an influence far greater than they deserve." "Everybody in this country seems to listen to them, casting aside sense and commonsense alike," said Peithon. "The other day it was Sambos. That fool revolted against us at the bidding of these men and fled west of the *Indus*, leaving his kingdom and treasure behind. He had been made to believe that his barren freedom in the desert was more honourable than a kingship under us. We went and captured Sindimana[1], his capital, and all his treasure. We also captured Brahmasthala, and hanged all the Brahmins who had instigated Sambos to revolt. One would have thought that this lesson should have been enough for the Brahmins and the Rulers. But, no, here is Mousikanos, who with such readiness submitted to us

1. Same as Sindhuvana or Saindhava-vana; modern Sehwan.

and allowed even his capital Alor to be fortified and garrisoned by Krateros, revolting against us at the instance of the Brahmins. His land is reputed to be fertile, his people virtuous, and the laws sane. And yet he is also a victim to this lunacy of revolt." "There must be an end to this," said Alexander. "Go and pursue the man and bring him to me. I shall meanwhile attack his fortified cities and raze them to the ground, and hang as many Brahmins as I can lay my hands on. Do thou the same. Severity alone will tell. Else, we shall have this perpetual game of submissions and revolts. Hasti, the Asvakas, the Kathaians, Poros Junior, Portikanos, and Sambos have all been taught a lesson for their throwing off their allegiance and revolting. Mousikanos too shall learn it." "I am informed just now by a man who has come from Eudemos and Philippos that the Kathaian exiles have been imposed upon by that Prince Chandragupta and by his black Brahmin, with some silly story of a lion having recognised Chandragupta as a King by licking his body. Those fools swallowed the fib, sedulously spread by the Brahmins, and made Chandragupta, who is said to have married a petty Princess somewhere, their King too, the King of the Aratti or Kingless (what a country for such contradictions!), the more so as they believed that we succeeded and they failed for the reason that we had a King and they had none! Chandragupta has promised to set them all free from our yoke and the yoke of Poros. If I know anything of human nature, it is this, that Chandragupta and his black Brahmin will rivet the chains on these gullible men even more firmly than we have ever done. They have brazenly popularised the Malava '*Song of Freedom*,' which has caught the imagination of silly folk. But, it is all a stunt. They have no sympathy with freedom really, and use it only as a convenient weapon against us," said Peithon. "We shall deal with Chandragupta and this

Brahmin when we return to India, unless Eudemos and Philippos finish them off earlier," said Alexander.

Alexander marched against the seven fortified cities of Mushikasena, including Alor, captured them, hanged all the Brahmins, enslaved the remaining inhabitants, and razed the cities to the ground. He also fortified and garrisoned strategic places in the country. Meanwhile, Mushikasena fought Peithon at the head of an army of peasants armed with spades, clubs, crow-bars, bill-hooks and firewood-sticks, and was defeated and captured. He was taken to Alexander's camp.

Alexander asked Mushikasena, "Why did you revolt, you fool?" "So that I may live with honour or die with honour. A Kshatriya like me should either die fighting, or fall into the fire and perish, to atone for his cowardice and to be reborn as an Agnikula Kshatriya who had passed through fire and could face any enemy. I chose the first course as it is more honourable, and as it also gave me a chance of showing you foreigners our principles." "I shall now show you my principles," said Alexander. "All your Brahmins will be hanged. You too shall not die with honour, as you want, but shall be hanged like a felon along with eleven select Brahmins in your own Capital." "Oh, how glorious a death!" said Mushikasena. "This is a death with honour. I am glad that I die for the freedom of my land. But before I die, let me prophesy what is in store for you and your people. The venerable Chanakya will continue the fight along with the glorious Prince Chandragupta. Soon you will not have an inch of land in this country. What is more, because of your murdering many innocent men and women and cows and Brahmins from mere lust for territory, the same mad desire shall seize all the members of your family and your Generals after

your death caused by a raging fever at Babylon. One of your two wives will murder the other. Then she and her posthumous son will be murdered. Your only other son will also be murdered. So too your half-brother and mother. Thus, your race will become extinct within twelve years of your death. Your Generals will continue this Dance of Death, and kill one another in a relentless struggle for territory." "Take him away, and hang him in his Capital with his Brahmins!" shouted Alexander in a fury, to Peithon.

Peithon took Mushikasena to his Capital city of Alor. There, in the presence of ten-thousand subjects of his, he had him and eleven Brahmins arranged in a row for hanging. Just before they were hanged, the twelve condemned men sang in unison the '*Song of Freedom*,' which ran:—

"For Freedom will we live,
For Freedom will we die,
For Freedom will we sing,
For Freedom will we swing!

Tyrants shall not quell us,
Favours shall not buy us,
Treaties shall not fool us,
Weapons shall not rule us!

Prisons shall not scare us!
Losses shall not break us,
Races shall not part us,
Princes shall not cheat us.

On, on, Ye comrades on,
Till Slav'ry's fort is breached,
On, on, Ye comrades on,
Till Freedom's goal is reached!

On, Sons of Freedom, on,
And never mind the cost,
On, Children of the Dawn,
And nothing will be lost.

What though the journey's long,
To Freedom's distant shore,
What though the thorns athrong,
And we are all footsore?

A whiff of Freedom comes,
And makes us hale and whole,
The Song of Freedom hums,
And Thraldom leaves our soul."

The assembled Indians also joined in the Song with enthusiasm, and said to the Greek Captains who threatened them, "Hang us also if you like." "We can't help it. How many can we hang?" said Peithon wearily. Then Mushikasena and the eleven Brahmins were hanged amidst shouts of "*Jai! Sitaram!*" which rent the skies. "It is a miserable business this," said Peithon to a Greek Captain. "At this rate, I shall not be the Satrap of the Indus Delta for long."

CHAPTER XX

THE THUNDERBOLT GOES WEST

THE King of Patala in the Indus Delta, bearing the proud title of *Maharaja*, came to Alexander and tendered his submission. Alexander received it, confirmed him as Ruler of his kingdom under his suzerainty, and sent him back to Patala, asking him to make suitable preparations for his reception. As he expected no more serious fighting in India, he sent away Krateros into Kamenia through the Bolan Pass and the Seistan desert, with all the elephants and with the Macedonians unfit for further service, and with sufficient troops to serve as escort. Hephaistion and Peithon were put in charge of the remaining troops, and asked to put colonists into cities already fortified, and to suppress all revolts by the Indians, and then to join him at Patala. Alexander then sailed down the river with the lightest troops. On the third day after he sailed, he learnt that the King of Patala had, at the instigation of the Brahmins who had accused him of cowardice for having submitted to a barbarian who had hanged his cousin Mushikasena, fled from Patala with most of the inhabitants, leaving the lands uncultivated. " I am sick of these submissions and revolts. What a country ! " exclaimed Alexander. He then had the

rebels pursued by the lightest troops. Many of the rebels were persuaded to return to their city and cultivate their lands. "Hanging is not advisable in such matters," said Alexander. "The Brahmins make heroes of those hanged, and make them more formidable than when alive." He entered Patala and directed Hephaistion to construct a fortified citadel. He then sent some of his men to go and dig wells in the adjacent coast in order to supply the fleet with water. Some Indians attacked and killed many of them. Alexander sent reinforcements, and the Indians were driven back into the desert. "The Brahmins wanted to prevent us from having food by leaving the lands uncultivated, and to prevent us from having water by trying to stop our digging of wells; they have signally failed in both. Our troubles are over," said Hephaistion. "I wish it were so, but dare not hope for it," said Peithon. "Don't be pessimistic," said Hephaistion. "I cannot take as rosy a view as you, since I have to stay here," said Peithon.

At Patala the *Indus* divided itself into two main branches, both of which were called the *Indus*. Alexander constructed a roadstead and dock at this city. He then sailed down the right branch of the river. Not a single Indian could be got to pilot the ships. On the second day a storm came and damaged most of the ships, and completely wrecked some of them. Alexander had some repaired, and some freshly constructed. He also sent some light troops who went into the interior and captured some Indians, who acted as pilots thereafter. When the river broadened out into the estuary, the oars could scarcely be raised in the swell. So the boats again drew to the shore, and the pilots steered them into a canal and anchored them. Here the tide ebbed, and the boats were left on dry ground. Alexander was alarmed at this phenomenon

which he had not seen before. He found to his surprise that, some hours later, the tide advanced and refloated most of the boats though some, which had been dragged further ashore by the ignorant men anxious to save them, were dashed to pieces on the shore.

He had the boats repaired. He then sent men in two boats to explore an island in the *Indus*, called "Kirata" or "Killouta," which was said to have harbours and drinking water. He then sailed past that island for 40 miles, and saw another island in the ocean. He returned to Kirata island that day and offered sacrifices to the gods. He sailed to the island in the ocean the next day, and offered sacrifices there too. Then he sailed out into the sea, away from land. "The peace of the Indian sea is wonderful," said he to Eumenes. "What a contrast to the never-ending excursions and alarms of the Indian land! Here, nobody wants to revolt against us, or, to fight us." He sacrificed bulls to Poseidon and threw them into the sea. He also threw a goblet and bowls of gold into the deep as thanks-offerings to the gods for having enabled him to reach there, and for helping Nearchos to undertake safely his contemplated voyage from there to the Persian Gulf.

He then returned to Patala and sailed down the *Indus* by its left mouth, and went easily down to a vast lake called *Narayana Saras*, where there were mighty fish. He anchored in the lake in a spot selected by the Indian pilots. Then, leaving Leonnatus in charge of the main fleet and army, he sailed out into the sea with a few ships. He returned and had his fleet anchored near the beach. He then explored the coast for a long distance with the help of a cavalry expedition lasting for three days. He had also wells dug along the coast. He then returned to his fleet and Patala. He constructed a harbour and docks at Killouta

island, and left provisions there for four months for Nearchos's men, and had several wells dug and every other preparation made for the voyage along the coast. The winds were not favourable then for sailing westwards. So, Nearchos and his men waited at Killouta island for the proper season to sail, while Alexander began his march westwards to Babylon.

Alexander crossed the river *Arabios*[1], marched into the Orietai[2] country, killed those who resisted, and took many prisoners. He then went to Rambagh, a leading city of the Orietai. He found its situation excellent, and asked Hephaistion to colonise the place. The Orietai and the Gadrosai surrendered at the town of Ora, and were allowed to go back and settle down in their towns and villages over which Appolophanes was made Satrap, with Leonnatus and an army to help him.

Then Alexander marched with Hephaistion and the rest of the army from Ora to Poura through the inhospitable Gadrosian desert. The sufferings of the army were indescribable. The heat was terrific, the sands were blazing, and food and water most scanty. Horses and mules perished of hunger and thirst by scores every day. Scores were also killed by the starving soldiers for food, and their deaths were given out as being due to heat and thirst. Alexander was not unaware of this fraud, but pretended not to be aware of it. He found some corn in some Gadrosian village on the way, seized it, sealed the bags and sent them with some guards to the coast for supplying Nearchos's fleet. But the guards were themselves starving, and so broke the seals, and they and other soldiers consumed the corn. Alexander forgave them when he knew how starved they

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1. Purali.
2. Or, the Aghoritai, from the *Aghor* river in their country.

had been. He sent down Thoas to the coast to see if water could be got. Thoas went to the sea-shore and found a race of fish-eaters there, poor, miserable, rude, uncultured, subsisting wholly on fish and with scanty supplies of water, and this too brackish water. So he returned empty-handed. The Phœnicians, Jews and Egyptians in the army had picked up large quantities of myrrh, nard and other valuable desert products in the earlier stages of the march.. They threw them away now exclaiming, "Scents and incense are not of any use to the starving or the thirsty." There were terrible thorns on the line of march. These tore off the flesh of the men and beasts who happened to be caught by them, like iron spikes.

As the marches were by nights, several slept during the day, and woke up to find that the rest had left. Thousands perished of hunger, heat and thirst in this terrible desert. To add to the disaster there was a sudden storm which caused a flood in a stream, and killed many of the camp-followers and women and children. Many of the soldiers had a narrow escape. Not a few soldiers perished by drinking enormous quantities of unhealthy water when they sighted it. Alexander shared to the full the privations of his troops, and marched at their head on foot in order to cheer them up. At one place some soldiers sighted a little water and took some in a helmet to Alexander, as if it was some precious substance. Alexander took it in his hands, thanked the men, scrutinised the yearning faces of the thousands of soldiers around him, and threw the water into the sands, saying, "We shall all drink together when we get enough." This at once endeared him to one and all, and steeled the resolution of the soldiers to brave every danger.

At last Poura was reached. The sixty days' journey from Ora to Poura had been the most terrible experience

imaginable. The majority of the army had perished, in the desert, of hunger, thirst and heat. Still, Alexander was proud of the achievement as only two Rulers had attempted to cross the desert before him, Semiramis who had fled from India with her army and had escaped with but twenty men, and Cyrus who had taken an army through it to invade India but had retreated with only seven men left.

Alexander gave his army a well-earned rest at Poura. He deposed Appolophanes for misgovernment, and made Thoas the Satrap of Gadrosia. As Thoas died of illness soon, he made Sibyrtios the Satrap of Arachosia and Gadrosia. Then he marched with his army through Karmania. When he was marching through Karmania, a messenger went to him and gave him a message from India, stating that the Greek mercenaries had plotted against Philippos, the Satrap of the Upper Indus, and had treacherously murdered him, and that the Macedonian bodyguards of Philippos had caught them in the very act and put them to death. Alexander then sent a letter to Eudemos and Omphis directing them to assume the administration of the Province previously governed by Philippos, till he could send a Satrap to govern it.

Krateros and his army and elephants joined Alexander in Karmania. Here Alexander sentenced Kleandor and Sitalkes to death for oppressing the inhabitants entrusted to their care. "It does not matter that the men you oppressed were not Hellenes," said he to them. "I am now the Supreme Lord of Asia, and must protect the lives and properties of Asiatics also." "But your teacher Aristotle himself has allowed all non-Hellenes to be plundered and enslaved by Hellenes," said Sitalkes. "He said so because he did not know Asiatics at close quarters, and also because he was not their ruler and bound to protect them. Kalanos tells me that a ruler who differentiates between his subjects

is no better than a robber," said Alexander. Then they were taken out and executed.

Alexander then resumed his march through Karmania, where the inhabitants were very friendly. He and his Companions were lying down at full length, in two covered waggons joined together, enjoying the music of the flute and followed by the soldiers crowned with garlands and making holiday in celebration of the Indian victories after the manner of Dionysios. The Karmanians gave the soldiers plenty of choice food and wine, and they feasted sumptuously. Alexander also celebrated a musical and gymnastic contest, and made Peukestas a Companion, in recognition of his yeoman service at Malvakot. Nearchos also went and met Alexander in a Karmanian city near the coast, and told him about his wonderful experiences. He was asked by Alexander to sail on to the mouths of the *Tigris* and *Euphrates*.

Then Alexander continued his march to Sousa. As he did so, he again took the Indian news-letter received in Karmania and read, "Incited by barbarian gold, and their cries, 'The Thunderbolt has gone west. Fear not. He will never come back. Kill this man of clay, this Philippos,' the mercenaries plotted and treacherously murdered Philippos." "Ah," said Alexander to Eumenes, "The Thunderbolt goes west, no doubt, but it will soon return to the east, and burst there over the revolting and the unsubdued nations. Let them beware!"

CHAPTER XXI

SATRAPS WITHOUT A KING

WHEN Alexander left India in September 325 B.C., he had left behind him Philippos as the Satrap of all his conquests in India above the confluence of the *Indus* with its tributaries. He was a kind of Resident and Political Agent supervising Abhisara, Arsakes, Omphis, and Poros Senior and Junior, who had been confirmed in their kingdoms and the territories added on to them, but had been directed to take his advice. He was in addition full Ruler of the other territories. He had been given a powerful army of Macedonians and mercenaries, besides all the Thracians. He had also a general command over Eudemos with his regiment in the upper valley of the *Indus*, over the Captains and garrisons of the forts established by Alexander at Massaka, Aornos, Pushkalavati, Udabhandapura, Takshasila, Nikaia, Boukephala, Pimprama, Sangala, Alexandria on the *Akesines*, Kamalkot, Multan and Alexandria at the confluence of the *Indus* with its tributaries.

Philippos was not remarkable for intelligence or tact. He was a very ordinary man who had none of the personal magnetism of Alexander. Yet, he was behaving as if he was a second Alexander. While Alexander had a genuine respect

for great men of any race, as evidenced by his regard for Poros Senior and Kalanos, and had kept his preference for Macedonians within control, Philippos openly preferred the Macedonians, and treated the mercenaries and other Greeks with ill-concealed contempt. For the Indians he had both contempt and hatred, contempt for their dark skins and different codes of honour and morals, and hatred because of his inability to subdue the Asvakani completely after their revolt, and because of his own insignificance beside people like Poros Senior who towered above him and considered him, he fancied, to be nothing better than a barbarian. So, like all petty men clothed in brief authority, he began to lord it over Poros Senior and Omphis by interfering with their internal affairs and championing the cause of their subjects who sought his help. Poros Senior resented this, and told Philippos frankly that he would be forced to refer the matter to Alexander if it continued. But, Philippos forestalled Poros, and wrote to Alexander a letter praising Omphis for his loyalty and exemplary obedience, and vaguely hinting that Poros was not quite loyal or obedient. Alexander too readily believed this story, and resolved to prefer Omphis to Poros Senior for any future post of responsibility and power.

Peithon, son of Agenor, had been made the Satrap of all the countries below the confluence of the *Indus* with its tributaries, and had been given a powerful army of Macedonians and mercenaries, besides being in command of the forts and garrisons of Saindhavavana, Maha-Urdha, Alor and Patala. Oxyartes, the father of Roxana and the Satrap of Parapomisadai, was also directed to aid him when necessary. He was Resident and Political Agent for the kingdoms of Mushikasena, Sambos, Oxykanos and Patala, and direct Ruler of the remaining territories.

He was a man of more than average ability, but fancied that he had been unnecessarily left behind in a remote and troublesome Satrapy, instead of being kept nearer to the centre of things. Still, so long as Alexander had kept him there, he had to remain there keeping the colonists in the colonies, and putting down the insurrection of the Indians.

Alexander had asked Nearchos to wait at the Kirata or Killouta island-harbour on the western mouth of the *Indus*, till the monsoon had quite subsided. Peithon was to see to the convenience and safety of Nearchos and his fleet. But, the moment Alexander had left India the Indians had lost all fear of the Greek army.

The Asvakani had revolted even before the departure of Alexander, and closed the Passes which they had opened only once to let Memnon enter India with his strong army, as they knew by then that Alexander had decided to return to Babylon by a different route, and so did not want to lose a single man by resisting these fresh and well-equipped Macedonians eager for a fray. Philippos had not been able to tackle them effectively. Vijayavarman too joined them now, and made them indulge in a series of guerilla attacks, which made the Greeks terribly afraid of venturing out alone after dark. So long as they were in battle-array, they would not find a single group of Asvakani to oppose them. But, when they were a little off their guard, the tribesmen would fall on them and kill them, and then abscond. The country was not rich, the hills were hard to climb, and the people uniformly hostile. The Greek mercenaries of Philippos became disgusted and angry at their being made to bear the brunt of the campaign in the Asvakani country, whereas the Macedonians lived a luxurious life in Udabhandapura, Takshasila and the

settled country. When some of them protested, Philippos had them whipped. This made all of them resolve to do away with him, a decision secretly encouraged by Chanakya, Vijayavarman and the Indian mercenaries.

One day in November 325 B.C., when Philippos was inspecting one of their regiments, eight men of that regiment at once attacked him treacherously and killed him, as resolved upon at a conspiracy the previous night. The Macedonian bodyguard of Philippos at once caught hold of four of the murderers, and put them to death. They also pursued the remaining four, and caught and killed them too. The Captain next in command sent an urgent letter to Alexander about all this. It was when Alexander was in Karmania that the letter reached him in February 324 B. C., and he sent the letter (as we have seen) to Eudemos and Omphis, asking them to assume the administration of the Satrapy previously governed by Philippos, till he could send a Satrap to govern it. This made the elder Poros bitter, as his claims had been overlooked and his erstwhile rival Omphis had been preferred. He grew very lukewarm towards Eudemos and Omphis and the Greeks, and began to rejoice inwardly at the growing successes of Chandragupta and his followers in Sind. His nephew, the younger Poros, because of his enmity to his uncle, became, on the contrary, an intimate friend of Eudemos.

Chandragupta had, after his marriage in January 325 B.C., been crowned Yuvaraj of Simphapura, and had been put in command of an army of ten-thousand Jats, one of the finest fighting races in India. He was soon joined by six-thousand Malavas, three-thousand Kshudrakas, two-thousand Madrakas under Vijayavarman, and one-thousand Kathaians. Rajasena and a thousand men from Magadha

had also joined him. He and Chanakya had, ever since their flight from Boukephala, resolved to organise a widespread revolt of the Indians against the Greeks and to drive them out of the country, and had also stirred up the Malavas and Kshudrakas and the people of Sind personally and through messengers to resist the invader, and revolt over and over again even if they were forced to submit once. They did not themselves want to risk a battle with the Greek hosts under Alexander's generalship. "He is going away. We can afford to wait. Fighting with and defeating the Captains left behind by him will be a far easier task. Even by doing that, we shall enhance our prestige among the fighting men of the Punjab and among the Kings and Princes all over India, and be able to get powerful allies to join us in an attack on Magadha," said Chanakya. "None will join us without some such achievement to our credit. It will be hopeless to attack Magadha alone."

They heard, in August 325 B. C., that Alexander would leave India for good in September, and resolved to attack the Greeks left behind by him the moment he left India. They carefully considered which part of the territory occupied by the Greeks should be attacked first. The Kathaian exiles were for attacking and re-taking Sangala. But those territories were now part of the kingdom of the elder Poros who was sure to resist, and Chanakya did not want to offend him as he wanted his alliance for attacking the Nandas. "Besides," said he to Chandragupta, "he is now receiving a subsidy from the Nandas for keeping on friendly terms with them. It is good of him not to attack us, because of your new relationship to him. But, if we were to attack him, the Nandas too would help him, and he would be too difficult a foe for us to subdue. Even a sudden attack on him is not advisable. If we fail, we shall be

ruined. Even if we succeed, we shall be doing a foolish thing, as we shall not have his help in fighting the Nandas, and he is the only considerable Prince, besides the Kalinga and Andhra Kings, who will have the courage to pit himself against the Nandas. His lust for territory and the inducement of his ambitious brother Vairochaka will in time induce him to join us in attacking the Nandas. Again, the people of Simhapura will not be willing to fight Poros, the kinsman of their King. So, we shall first attack the Yavanas in Sind. We have already stirred up the Malavas, Kshudrakas, Sauviras and Saindhavas. We have also got ten-thousand more troops recently. The people of Alor, Saindhavavana, Maha-Urdha, Brahmasthala and Patala are ready to revolt. The hanging of Mushikasena has created a deep feeling of disgust and hatred against Alexander and the Greeks. So too the massacre of all the inhabitants of Malavakot. Alexander is a great General; but Philippos, Peithon, Eudemos and the Captains who will be left behind in the forts are third-rate men. So, we shall attack the Greeks in Sind. Now, which town shall we attack first?" "We need not attack any town to begin with. We shall go through Sind rousing disaffection everywhere and gathering adherents. Instead of attacking Peithon or the Captains at first, we shall go and attack the men under Nearchos, waiting peacefully at Kirata island to sail for the Persian Gulf after the monsoon completely subsides. This third army of Alexander we shall send shifting westwards before their time, after the first and second armies which would have already left under Alexander and Krateros, had gone. This will not only have a tremendous moral effect all over Sind and the Punjab, but will also send away from India the only Greek of probity and great ability left here, Nearchos. Nearchos is without selfish or personal ambition, and

is a man of iron resolution. But, he has already promised Alexander to take the ships safely to the shores of Persia, 'if the sea were navigable and the thing feasible for mortal man.' To keep this promise, he will at once sail away with his men on our attacking him, instead of fighting us and taking risks," said Chandragupta. "Excellent," said Chanakya. "You have the eye of a true General for strategy. We have our Udumbara in their camp as a faithful Indian pilot, aping the Greek customs. The man is an expert pilot, and learnt the art at Tamaralipti. He will scare Nearchos's men all right at the proper time with his picturesque words and fine acting."

Ten-thousand horse under Chandragupta and Chanakya rushed into Sind like an avalanche on 1st September 325 B.C., as soon as Alexander had left. They were joined on the way by hordes of Malava, Kshudraka and Saindhava horsemen. In twenty days the whole of Sind was in revolt, and Peithon had to defend every fort. Distracted, he could not go to the help of Nearchos, and sent word to him to shift for himself. Chandragupta and his horsemen swooped on Nearchos on the 20th of September. "They have come through. But this is only the advance guard. More will be coming soon. They are as numerous as the leaves of the forest. We shall not be able to tackle them any more than a farmer a swarm of locusts, or a canoe the waves of the Indian ocean. I can however take you to a safe Bay further away," said Udumbara to the Greeks. Nearchos's men were panic-stricken. Nearchos found it hopeless to put up a fight. He resolved to accept the kind offer of Udumbara and sail at once. On the 21st of September 325 B.C., while the monsoon was still raging, he sailed away westwards with his ship under the expert guidance of Udumbara, as his men considered the stormy

sea safer than the land with Chandragupta's men attacking them. The last ship had just sailed out of reach, when Chandragupta's men occupied the camp and discharged a shower of arrows. "Let them shower as many arrows now as they like," said Udumbara. "The sea will not be wounded by them." After some days of skilful sailing in the face of the raging monsoon winds, he piloted them into a safe Bay which Nearchos named "*Alexander's Haven.*"[1] Then Udumbara took leave of the Greeks, and was sent away with profuse thanks and many rewards.

News of Chandragupta's successful attack on Nearchos spread through the whole countryside like wild fire. Soon there was not a single village in Sind which was not in revolt against the Greeks. The people took their spears, hatchets, knives, clubs and even firewood-sticks, and rushed to join Chandragupta's army.

Chandragupta invested Patala. The Captain and garrison put up a stout resistance. Peithon himself was in charge. The Macedonians were still, man to man, equal to the Indians, and had also stored enough of provisions. Saindhavavana, Alor, and Maha-Urdha too were invested by Vijayasimha, Chanakya and Rajasena, but were also defended vigorously. The Greeks were confident that Alexander would be sure to come to their help soon when he learnt of their plight, and did not want to incur his displeasure by unmanly surrenders. The whole countryside was now in the hands of the Indians, and the forts alone were in the hands of the Greeks. Chandragupta feared that Peithon might induce Nearchos to go to his help. So, he at once rushed to *Alexander's Haven* with five-thousand horse, leaving Vijayavarman, who had

1. The Bay near Karachi.

now joined him, in charge of the siege of Patala. As soon as Nearchos saw some Indians approaching to attack him, he resumed his voyage on the 23rd of October 325 B.C., and left the Indian shores for good.

Chandragupta returned to Patala. He had no proper siege materials, and found that all the forts in Sind had been rendered impregnable by the Greeks. He consulted with Chanakya. "There are only five ways of capturing forts," said Chanakya, "namely, by intrigue, through spies, by winning over the enemies" people, by siege, and by assault. Intrigue is impossible here as no Greek Captain will dare to take a bribe and betray a fort so long as Alexander is alive, seeing that he will meet with swift death like Tyriaspes. Spies are of no use against a powerful and determined foreign foe, who can easily detect them by their very colour. Winning over the whole body of the Greeks is impossible so long as Alexander lives. Taking a fort by assault or storm requires a powerful army, many elephants, and a force vastly superior to the defending garrison. So, the only thing to do is to sit down in front of these forts, and reduce them by slow starvation when their provisions are exhausted. That will take at least two years!" Chandragupta too agreed.

Some elephants were essential for the siege and general fighting. Simhapura had only three elephants, and all the elephants of the Kings of Sind had been taken away from them by Alexander through Krateros. An invasion of Magadha also would require a large number of trained war-elephants. An appeal to Poros Senior for even fifty elephants was unsuccessful. Poros replied that he dared not send any elephants, as Peithon and Philippos would at once know about it and write to Alexander who would consider him as a man devoid of honour. He added that so long as Alexander was alive, he would keep his word and be his

friend and ally, and so he would be even obliged to aid the Greeks in Sind against Chandragupta, should he receive a letter from Alexander to that effect. He said that he would take his orders only from Alexander, and not from Peithon, or Philippos, or Eudemos.

Chandragupta was furious. "This man is only moved by purely selfish reasons. He is afraid of Alexander, and will fight for him even against us Indians. His fighting Alexander at the *Vitasta* was only to vindicate his own personal courage and independence, and not from any desire to defend his race or culture. I wonder how such a man will help us against Magadha or the Greeks." "Well," said Chanakya, "One part of him is in mortal fear of Alexander. Another, and even more significant part, has an unlimited lust for territory. Even before Alexander came he wanted to annex Pimprama and Sangala, but failed. Now that he has got his kingdom extended up to the *Hyphasis*, he is dreaming of becoming the overlord of India. Simply because Alexander embraced him as a Brother, the fool has taken himself to be another Alexander. He has taken the subsidy paid to him by the Nandas as a tribute and as a sign of weakness, and thinks that he can easily defeat them. He has, I hear, very recently demanded that it be raised from a hundred-thousand *Suvarnas* to five-hundred-thousand *Suvarnas* per year. Nakranasa and Sakatala were against giving him anything at all. I have asked Jeevasiddhi to induce the Princes not only to refuse the increase, but also to stop the previous payment and send an insulting reply. This will infuriate Poros and Vairochaka, who will be tactfully handled by our Visalaksha, who is already there. They will then agree to join us in an expedition against the Nandas on our promising half of Magadha to Poros, and on our

giving our conquests in Sind to him as an additional sop. They are also quite capable of trying to usurp the whole of Magadha. But, of course, after defeating the Nandas with their aid, we shall find some method of quietly finishing them off. Leave all that to me." "But, will it not be treacherous on our part to take their help and then extirpate them?" asked Chandragupta. "I shall so arrange it that morally we appear to be free from blame. Assassination of individuals is bad in private morality, but is inevitable in present-day politics. They will murder us if we do not murder them earlier. So, it is defensive murder. It is also better for the country to kill a few such leaders than kill thousands of innocent rustics, who follow them from motives of loyalty." "But, the thousands will be killed openly, and not secretly," said Chandragupta. "Not always. What about the massacre of the Madrakas? What about the attack by Alexander and his armed Greeks on the unarmed Malavas working in the fields at Kamalkot, and on women and children fleeing for safety? What about ambushes? Even Rama, the Soul of Righteousness, killed Vali by shooting at him unseen. Even Krishna, God-incarnate, had Jayadratha killed by a trick. Don't be squeamish about such things, for, if you are, you will never be King. Mind you, trade and agriculture will not suffer by the course I advocate. The civil population in general will not mind in the least such leaders alone being killed secretly. Why should the common people suffer for the ambitions and follies of kings and politicians, if that can be helped?" asked Chanakya. "All right, I leave it to you. Let us leave our Lieutenants in charge here, and go to Kalinga accepting the King's recent invitation, and get five-hundred good war-elephants and come back. Our power and prestige

will increase a hundredfold with these elephants, and Parvateswara will be tempted to join us against the Nandas," said Chandragupta. "All right," said Chanakya. "Samiddharthaka also writes from there that the King is really in earnest."

Chandragupta and Chanakya left for Kalinga leaving Vijayasimha, Vijayavarman, Rajasena and others in charge of the blockades. The King of Kalinga received them most hospitably, and gave them 300 trained elephants and a party of his expert elephant-catchers to catch some more elephants from the forests. The party caught no less than 300 more elephants in six months of persistent trapping. One of the elephants caught under Chandragupta's own direction was a majestic animal, 12 feet high, with fine tusks protruding three feet. It was tamed quickly by Chandragupta who called it *Chandralekha*. It became deeply attached to the King who took it as his personal elephant. Everybody admired the stately elephant worthy of an Emperor. Chanakya improved the occasion by spreading a story that the wild elephant had, at the very sight of Chandragupta, approached him and knelt submissively before him and received him on its back, having recognized him as the Emperor for whom it had been born on the earth as his *Hastiratna*[2]. The Indians readily believed the story. The King of Kalinga was convinced, on hearing this story and seeing this marvellous elephant, that Chandragupta would certainly become the Emperor of Magadha one day. So, he entered into a secret treaty with him under which he agreed to attack Magadha from the south with fifty-thousand troops and 10,000 wild tribesmen, as soon as Chandragupta and Chanakya had advanced with their army to Pataliputra;

2. Elephant-jewel.

in return, he was to be exempted from paying tribute for sixty years, so that he might be enabled to defray the approximate cost of this military aid he was to render. He was, even after the lapse of the sixty years, to be merely subjected to the tribute without any interference in the internal affairs. He added, "Your grandfather riveted the chains on Kalinga. He was treacherously killed by his ungrateful masters. May it be given to his grandson to free Kalinga! Of course, we are too weak now to help, till you are powerful enough to attack Pataliputra. Else, my country will be invaded by the Nandas and devastated." Chanakya and Chandragupta agreed that this stipulation was reasonable, and took leave of the King and went to Simhapura with six-hundred war-elephants and one-thousand horse, and five-thousand Savara and Khond warriors, who had agreed to follow Chandragupta under their leaders Vairantya and Khondoveera. It was late in July 323 B. C. by the time they reached Simhapura again. They and their elephants were received with the most rapturous welcome by the people of Simhapura and the neighbouring countries.

Great events had happened in the interval. Largely due to the machinations of Visalaksha and Siddharthaka, Philippos had been murdered in November 325 B. C., as already stated, and Poros Senior had been estranged from the Greeks by the subsequent arrangements made by Alexander. Poros had also received an insulting letter from the Nandas. It ran thus: "Your letter begging for an increase of the allowance paid to you till now by us graciously, taking pity on your poverty, has been received and rejected. The present allowance itself is stopped owing to your insolent tone. It will, however, be resumed, if you come to Pataliputra and beg for it from the King on bended knees." Jeevasiddhi had been at the bottom of this letter,

to which Rakshasa too had finally agreed at the instance of Nakranasa and Sakatala, who had asked him to vindicate the King's dignity, and of Badhasala who had boasted that he could bring a dozen Poroses in chains if ordered to do so. Poros went into a frenzy of rage on reading this letter. He showed it to his trusted confidant Visalaksha, who perused it and remarked, "Even Alexander was forced by you to treat you like a King. Shall this barber's son be allowed to treat you like his slave?" Poros was stung to the quick by this remark, and resolved at once to join Chandragupta in his attack on Magadha. He said to Swarnamayi, "I shall go to Pataliputra, all right, but not to beg for money from this barber's son on bended knees. He shall beg of me on bended knees for his very life. I would have marched alone against him but for my ignorance of the country, and especially of the rivers. Besides, it is good to have some claimant to the throne as our ally. Let Chanakya and Chandragupta come back from Kalinga. I shall at once enter into an alliance with them against Magadha."

Soon after Chanakya and Chandragupta returned, news reached India of Alexander's death at Babylon in June 323 B. C., at the early age of 33, of fever and suspected poisoning. This had an electric effect. The Indians were jubilant. Peithon, Eudemos and the Greek Captains and garrisons were depressed in the extreme. Chandragupta, Chanakya and Vijayavarman stormed Alor. The citizens also aided them from within. The fort was captured after a desperate fight, and 800 Greek soldiers were killed, and their Captain and 11 of his Lieutenants hanged at the very place where Mushikasena and the Brahmins had been hanged. Peithon and Eudemos appealed to Poros Senior to go to the help of the other beleaguered garrisons in Sind. Poros turned a

deaf ear at first. Maha-Urdha fell to Vijayavarman and Chandragupta, and a thousand more Greeks were killed. The Captain and eleven select Greeks were hanged there also. Vijayavarman wanted to have 7,000 Greeks killed like the 7,000 Madrakas massacred by Alexander. Peithon and Eudemos were in despair. There was no use appealing to Omphis, who was himself hard beset by the Asvakas. The Kings of Abhisara and Kashmir and Arsakes had ceased to pay any heed to their appeals. Poros Junior was too weak to be of much help. So Peithon and Eudemos appealed to Poros Senior to come and take the country east of the *Indus* for himself as part of his Satrapy, and allow the Greek garrisons of Patala and Saindhavavana to retire to the west of the *Indus* with their arms and flags.

Poros's cupidity and vanity were roused. He promised to enter into an alliance with Chandragupta agreeing to join him in an invasion of Magadha with his entire army and with the Greek, Persian, Saka and other mercenaries, if he was promised half the entire kingdom, and if the blockades of Saindhavavana and Patala were raised and the whole of Sind evacuated and allowed to be under his overlordship. Else, he threatened to join the Greeks with his entire army, and to annihilate Chandragupta's army, and to hand over Chandragupta and Chanakya to the Greeks. "You see now what a wretch this Poros is," said Chanakya to Chandragupta. "He has become an *Atatayin*[3] by this base threat, and should be killed without the least compunction when the proper time comes. We shall now agree to his rascally terms, just as a helpless citizen agrees to a robber's terms till the Police and Magistrates appear on the scene. Nipunaka writes to say that the Kings of Manjupatan

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3. A villaincus desperado who can be killed at sight according to the Hindu law-books.

and Kamarupa have agreed to join us, as soon as our armies enter Magadha. That means more troops for us to fight and crush the men of Poros, after the Nandas are destroyed." Chanakya and Chandragupta agreed readily to Poros's terms, but stipulated that the Rulers of Alor, Saindhavavana, Maha-Urddha and Patala should be given back their capital cities and entire dominions, and made to pay to Poros only the tributes they were paying formerly to the Persian Emperor Darius. Poros agreed at once. Chandragupta and Chanakya raised the blockades of Saindhavavana and Patala, and Peithon and the Greek Captains and garrisons withdrew safely to the west of the *Indus*, giving the forts back to the Rulers of Sind to be held under Poros Senior, in whose kingdom they were now included. Chandragupta and Chanakya withdrew to Simhapura with their troops, now swollen to one-hundred and fifty-thousand by the addition of thousands more of Malavas, Kshudrakas, Sauviras and Saindhavas, and with their prestige increased tenfold. The grateful Kings of Alor, Saindhavavana, Patala and Maha-Urdha gave them gold enough to pay the entire army for five years.

Then Chandragupta and Chanakya and Poros began slowly making their preparations for the invasion of Magadha. As it was an enterprise of the first magnitude, which had proved too much even for Alexander and his veterans, they resolved to get everything completely ready before launching on it. They took two years over it, and enlisted every possible person. By September 321 B.C. the preparations were at last complete. Poros had mustered together 300 elephants, 500 chariots, 10,000 horse and 50,000 infantry, besides 70,000 Greek, Saka, Kirata, Kambhoja, Parasika, Balhika and Asvakani mercenaries, eager for a share in the loot of the fabulous wealth of the Nandas. Chandragupta

had mustered together 600 elephants, 1,000 chariots, 25,000 horse and 1,25,000 infantry consisting of Jats, Kshudrakas, Malavas, Sauviras, Saindhavas, Savaras and Khonds. Chandragupta, Chanakya and Poros were proud of these fine armies, and felt confident of meeting and beating the Nanda hosts, especially with the promised help of the Kings of Kalinga, Kamarupa and Manjupatan, and the expected rising of some of the Nanda troops and citizens in Chandragupta's favour. Poros had also been cheered in the meanwhile by the news that, at the second partition of Alexander's Empire made by Antipater at Triparadeisos in B.C. 321, he had been recognized as the King in charge of the whole of the country east of the *Hydaspes*, and of Sind, and the Indus delta, and Omphis as the King merely of the territory between the *Indus* and the *Hydaspes*, and that Peithon had been given the Satrapies bordering on the Paropanisadai to the west of the *Indus*. This made Poros's position in Sind legal and secure, and made the Greek mercenaries freely enlist under him as under a person recognized by their Rulers.

In September 321 B.C. the combined armies of the allies were ready for the march. They also heard the welcome news that their numbers had created such an impression of certain victory over the Nandas that the Kalingas had resolved to launch their attack on Pataliputra from the south, and had begun mobilising their troops, that the King of Kamarupa had decided to invade Magadha from the east, and that the King of Manjupatan too had made up his mind to swoop down on Pataliputra from the north, without waiting any further. So, the allies began their march in high spirits and flushed with confidence. Chandragupta and Chanakya were in supreme command of one army, and Poros, with his brother

Vairochaka and son Malayaketu to help him, was in charge of the other army. Chandragupta was in very high spirits. "At last I am returning home," said he to Chanakya. "Did I not tell you when we crossed the *Jumna* that we were leaving only to return?" said Chanakya, "and now I tell you once more that we go only to return." "Return?" said Chandragupta, "Never! We go to conquer or to die." Chanakya smiled. "Oh, no. You have not understood me. We shall conquer the Nandas, and shall return here to make you King over these Satraps who are without a King, from the Hindu-kush to the mouths of the *Indus*."

CHAPTER XXII

THE FALL OF THE NANDAS

THE Nandas too made feverish preparations to meet the threatened invasion from all four sides. Their whole army consisted of 2,00,000 infantry, 20,000 cavalry, 2,000 chariots and 4,000 elephants. Badhasala was in supreme command, under the personal direction of Rakshasa and the Nanda King and Princes. Below him Bhadrabhata was in charge of the elephantry, Purushadatta of the cavalry, Balagupta of the chariots, Simhabala of the infantry, Chandrabhanu of the bullock-waggons and other transport, and Bhagurayana of the Intelligence Department. Badhasala was a favourite of Rakshasa and the Nandas, but was devoid of military ability. In peace times he would impress people well with his fine physique, grand moustache, and brusque and even bullying manners. But he was of absolutely no use in war. He knew neither tactics nor strategy. He was, at bottom, lacking even in personal courage. Worst of all, he was, unknown to Rakshasa and the King and Princes who trusted him implicitly, corrupt to the core. To please Dhanananda he had been asking for the army much less than the minimum required for keeping it in reasonable efficiency. And, of the

amount granted, he was taking one half as commission from the contractors for arms, provisions and supplies. The contractors did not complain, and, in their turn, supplied the most worthless articles, pleasing the minor heads of the army with minor presents. Thus, during the nine years of Badhasala's command the Nanda army had steadily deteriorated as a fighting machine. The natural consequence was that the vassal Princes, like the Kalingas and Andhras, began to delay remitting their tributes.

Badhasala had also alienated almost every officer in the army by his arrogant disposition. The whole army was so disgusted that almost every one wished that Badhasala would meet with defeat.

When Badhasala heard of this serious invasion of Magadha, he held a hurried consultation with his Generals. His talk convinced them that he was terribly afraid of being routed, though he pretended that it was but child's play to repel the invaders. Purushadatta, Bhadrabhata, Simhabala, Balagupta, Chandrabhanu and Bhagurayana had already decided to desert to Chandragupta during the great fight. They had become tired of Nanda oppression, favouritism, and inefficiency. "The Nandas must go if Magadha is to live with honour," Bhadrabhata had said at their meeting the previous night. Balagupta had agreed and added, "Chandragupta will raise Magadha to a height of glory undreamt of till now." They had all then resolved to suggest to Badhasala to await all the four invading armies at Pataliputra, and then smash the invaders and kill them to a man. Their intention was to demoralise the people of the Empire, and to a create a defeatist mentality in the army by the enemy's capture of all the towns on the way.

So, when Badhasala mooted the question as to where they should meet the enemy, Bhadrabhata said, "We are so

sure of victory that it will be bad policy to meet the invaders at Indraprastha or any outlying town, lest the defeated enemy should escape and cause trouble again. It seems to me to be good policy to lure them to the Capital without opposition, and then inflict on them crushing defeats, and kill them to a man. For a General of your ability this should be child's play." Badhasala was pleased by the compliment, and yet questioned the rest who too echoed Bhadrabhata's suggestion, Purushadatta adding, "We shall reserve our horses for our own advance after their extermination." So, the Vote at the Army General Headquarters was in favour of leaving the outlying towns undefended, and to lure the enemy to Pataliputra and finish him off in a great battle outside the fortifications.

Badhasala considered this decision peculiarly his own, and went to the urgent meeting of Ministers that day, to expound his policy. All the Ministers, including Rakshasa, Nakranasa, Sakatala and Jeevasiddhi, were there. The King and Princes and Sarvarthasiddhi were also there. Badhasala expounded what he called his supremely strategic plan, and said that all the Generals were unanimously for it. Rakshasa was surprised. "What! Leave Indraprastha, Hastinapura, Kanyakubja, Radhapura, Prayag, Benares, Nandangarh, Vaisali, Vardhamanapura and Rampurwa undefended to fall to the enemy without a fight! I can't believe that Purushadatta, the dashing Cavalry Captain, and Bhadrabhata, the great Elephant Chief, would have supported such a policy." "They not only supported it, but pointed out its advantages," said Badhasala, and gave out the details of the discussions at that day's meeting of the Generals. "It seems to me," said Jeevasiddhi, "that the plan is not without merit. If we take our entire army to Indraprastha, there may not be enough men here to

defend the City against an invasion from Kamarupa in the east, Kalinga in the south, and Manjupatan in the north. If we take out four armies in four directions, they will not be so overpoweringly strong as to defeat the enemy with ease as our combined army will be. Don't forget that all our four enemies are divided by our vast Empire and can unite only here, we being right in the centre of them all. So, if we keep our whole army here, we can meet each enemy army as it comes and pulverize it. Even if all of them come at the same time, they must attack us separately at the different gates. We can be in this impregnable City, and attack and defeat them separately. By this plan we can also be sure that there will be no revolt of the citizens in Pataliputra, where I am told that there are several concealed adherents of Chandragupta. Besides, our Imperial Treasury, the richest in the world, is here. That will be the main objective of all the four invading armies. It does not appear to me to be safe to leave this great Treasury unguarded, and go to meet the penniless adventurers coming hither. Again, if we take out four armies to meet the enemies, it may cost us not less than ten-million *Suvarnas*, which can be saved by waiting here." The argument about the Treasury and the expense had its telling effect on the Nandas in general, and Dhanananda in particular. "I agree with Badhasala and Jeevasiddhi that it is better to save our money, and await the invaders here and then kill them off to a man," said Dhanananda. "I too agree," said the King. The other six Nanda Princes too agreed. Nakranasa and Sakatala agreed, simply to spite Rakshasa whom they execrated. Rakshasa found himself out-voted. All that he could do was to make the Council agree that the forts on the way should be allowed to be defended against the invaders. "By doing so," said Rakshasa, "Our people in the outlying districts and towns

will have confidence that we defend them also. The enemy armies too will be weakened by this warfare before they reach here and are smashed by our fresh army. If they leave the forts uncaptured and advance straight here, their retreat can be completely cut off by those garrisons." Jeevasiddhi declared at once that he was for this amendment, as it would uphold the prestige of the Nandas and yet not cause any additional expense or risk. Badhasala too, thereupon, agreed that the amendment was desirable and might be made. It was unanimously agreed to.

The whole army of the Nandas was therefore kept at Pataliputra, whose fortifications were made as strong as possible. Orders went out to the Captains and garrisons of the forts on the invaders' line of march to defend themselves, and not to expect any help from the centre. They were dispirited by the messages, and resolved to put up merely a nominal resistance.

Jeevasiddhi had sent word to Chanakya about the decision of the Nandas. The army of Chandragupta and Parvataka soon reached Indraprastha, and saw the Jumna-crossing left undefended. Chandragupta said to Chanakya, "What a contrast to the former scene when the *Jumna* bank was full of troops!" As soon as the army had crossed over and begun the siege, the Captain and garrison surrendered. That was repeated at Hastinapura, Radhapura, Kanyakubja, Prayag and Benares. Chandragupta issued strict orders that no citizen was to be molested and no private property commandeered. Everything taken as supplies was paid for at current rates of prices. Poros was not willing at first to follow this policy, and said that at least free supplies should be exacted. Chanakya and Chandragupta prevailed on him and the Greek and other

mercenaries to keep quiet, promising to pay them liberally out of the eight-hundred million gold coins hoarded by the Nandas. Chanakya began ostentatiously to keep accounts of their expenses, with a view to repayment from the Nanda treasury. "Chandragupta will bear his own expenses," he proclaimed. The people were all grateful to Chandragupta and Chanakya for this freedom from pillage, and, of course, did not include Parvataka or the mercenaries in this gratitude.

Meanwhile, the Kalinga King had invaded Magadha, as the ally of Chandragupta, with 60,000 troops under himself and 10,000 Savaras under their own Chiefs. He advanced on Vardhamanapura. The feeble garrison surrendered without a blow, and he marched on to Pataliputra. The King of Kamarupa advanced from the east, as another ally of Chandragupta. With an army of 50,000 he marched on Vaisali, captured it and proceeded to Pataliputra. The King of Manjupatan and Kartripura in Nepal also swooped down with an army of 40,000 Nepalese, ostensibily to aid Chandragupta, but really to have a share in the Nanda millions. He captured Nandangarh and Rampurwa, and advanced on Pataliputra.

All the armies reached Pataliputra by arrangement at midnight on Monday, a full-moon day, and invested the City from all sides. Chanakya, Poros, Vairochaka, the Parsikas and Greeks attacked the city from the north; the King of Manjupatan and Kartripura and the King of Kamarupa attacked it from the east; Chandragupta and the Kalingas attacked it from the south; the Balhikas and Kiratas attacked it from the west.

That Monday evening Jeevasiddhi, who had the reputation of being the greatest Astrologer in India and a very saintly man fanatically devoted to the Nandas and

Rakshasa, met Badhasala and all the other Generals and Captains secretly and separately, and told them that there would be a great battle the next morning outside the gates of Pataliputra, that the day, the first day after the full-moon which was also a Tuesday, was most inauspicious for the Nandas and their supporters, and that a terrible defeat was certain. The Generals and Captains asked him in dismay: "What are we to do?" He replied, "What can you do? No one can escape Fate. But I see that you will escape with your life." Each person he talked to thus got not only a settled conviction that the next day's battle was going to end in a decisive defeat for the Nandas, but that he himself was ordained by Fate to run away and save his life.

The next morning, the Nandas and Rakshasa resolved to sortie forth out of the northern and southern main gates, and fight Chanakya and Chandragupta respectively. Rakshasa had classified the troops at the western and eastern gates as riffraff, hardly worth a foeman's steel.

At Jeevasiddhi's instance the Nanda King and his brothers chose the northern gate, as it was not auspicious to issue out of the southern gate dedicated to Yama, the God of Death. Sukalpa and his seven brothers, Pandugati, Bhutapala, Rashtrapala, Govishanaka, Dasasiddhaka, Kaivarta and Dhanananda issued forth out of the northern gate in splendid golden chariots drawn by the finest steeds and followed by 1,000 other chariots, 2,000 elephants, 15,000 cavalry and a hundred-thousand infantry, led by Balagupta, Bhadrabhata, Purushadatta and Simhabala respectively, under the Commander-in-chief Badhasala. As directed by Chanakya, Poros and the Greeks pretended to run away from the charge of the elephants. The King and the seven Princes thought that

the battle was won, and they pursued the retreating army very fast in their fleet chariots. They were soon far in advance of their army, and were in fact in the middle of the enemy army which closed round them under the orders of Chanakya, who closed the ring with 200 Malava chariots. Just at this moment, the astounded Princes saw their chariots, cavalry, elephants and infantry retreating; Bhadrabhata, Purushadatta, Balagupta and Simhabala had declared that the Princes had been trapped, and that it was no use fighting any further and had retreated, and Badhasala had also pusillanimously agreed, in order to save his own skin.

Seeing themselves surrounded by Chanakya, Poros, Malayaketu and their hosts, the Princes got down from their chariots and fought bravely with their swords, but were overpowered and killed. At the news of their death their whole army broke and fled into the City. The Brahmins and other discontented elements in the City promptly revolted, and killed many of the troops.

Rakshasa had gone with 1,00,000 infantry, 1,000 chariots, 5,000 horse and 2,000 elephants through the southern gate to fight Chandragupta and the Kalingas. The fight was fierce. In the middle of it, Rakshasa received news that the King and all the Princes had been slain outside the northern gate and their army routed. In great grief he left the battlefield, and rushed with a body of cavalry into the City, to go to the northern gate and see the dead bodies of his masters. His leaderless army lost heart and broke, and fled into the City losing many thousands in the pursuit by Chandragupta, many hundreds more being killed by the rebellious citizens.

Rakshasa was permitted by Chanakya to see the corpses of the King and the Princes, and to give them

a royal funeral. He wept bitterly over their fate and went with the dead bodies into the City, showed them to Sarvarthasiddhi, and gave them a royal funeral. Sarvarthasiddhi pretended to be heart-broken, and became even more ascetic and other-worldly than before. Rakshasa tried to make him take up the leadership of the broken Nanda army and fight. But he found that he was quite spiritless and had lost interest in everything. The blockade of the town by Chandragupta, Chanakya, Poros and their allies was complete. Even the loyal citizens found that they could not have any kind of communication with the outside world and that their commerce was ruined. Their properties outside the city-walls were also looted. They therefore asked Rakshasa and Sarvarthasiddhi either to protect them by defeating the invaders and suppressing the rebels within, or to surrender the City to Chandragupta and Poros. Rakshasa finally agreed to surrender the City and sent word to Chandragupta, Chanakya and Poros that he was ready to surrender. Sarvarthasiddhi put on yellow robes and went to a penance-grove, followed by Rakshasa whose brain was now a furnace of incipient plots.

The city-gates were opened. Chanakya, Chandragupta and Poros entered the City with their troops. Chanakya chose a big mansion for the temporary residence of Poros and Chandragupta till their formal entry into 'Suganga' Palace. He and his numerous spies kept their eyes and ears open for unearthing and countering the machiavellian plots of Rakshasa. Poros, Vairochaka and Malayaketu, all of whom they suspected of evil designs against Chandragupta. They were meanwhile busy finding out suitable opportunities for executing their own machiavellian plots against them and Sarvarthasiddhi. "I have only destroyed the Nandas so far, I have yet to crown you as

King and make you supreme," said Chanakya to Chandragupta confidentially, after installing him in a wing in the mansion, another wing of which was being occupied by Poros.

CHAPTER XXIII

CHANDRAGUPTA CROWNED AT LAST

THE defeat and death of all the Nanda Princes at the battle of Pataliputra, and the extirpation of all the other members of the Nanda family with the exception of Sarvarthasiddhi, brought about a most complex situation. Chanakya had to resolve this confused tangle and make Chandragupta King. He set about it with characteristic patience, caution and thoroughness. He did not like to give Poros half the kingdom promised him, or indeed anything at all. Poros was now calling himself not only Parvateswara, but also Sarvabhauma and Chakravartin,[1] and was given to much drinking and boasting. But it was no joke to get rid of him, Vairochaka and Malayaketu and their mighty army on the one hand, and of Rakshasa and Sarvarthasiddhi on the other. The majority of the citizens of Pataliputra were far too much attached to Rakshasa to be at once won over. There were also the Kings of Kalinga, Kamarupa and Manjupatan to be reckoned with. So, Chanakya bided his time and wanted, if possible, his different sets of opponents to help him indirectly in the accomplishment of his scheme.

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1. Ruler of the worid; Emperor.

Rakshasa's first idea was to make Sarvarthasiddhi King. But he found him too feeble, unenterprising and other-worldly for the job. He tried to make him marry some woman and beget a Prince whom he could set up as the real heir to the throne as against Chandragupta. But Sarvarthasiddhi was too old, unromantic and unambitious to fall in with this plan. He said, "I am not anxious to marry or fight. I do not want the throne. Let Chandragupta or Parvateswara occupy it if they want it. I want to be left in peace." So Rakshasa kept him in a wood, and tried to kill Chandragupta by using Sarvarthasiddhi's name. He went secretly to Chandragupta and told him that he would be glad to continue as his hereditary Prime Minister, as he was of the ancient line of the Kings of Magadha, but that he did not like to serve Parvateswara or to have half the kingdom given to him. Chandragupta consulted Chanakya secretly, and, with his consent, made Rakshasa his Prime Minister.

Rakshasa arranged one day to have some poisoned jujube fruit[2] sent to Chandragupta, falsely stating that Sarvarthasiddhi, who was above poisoning others, had sent it as *Prasadam*.[3] Chanakya came to know of the fraud, through Siddharthaka, and had some good jujube fruit substituted in its place in transit. He then gave it to Chandragupta in Rakshasa's presence, sending the poisoned fruit to Sarvarthasiddhi as *Prasadam* sent by Rakshasa. Sarvarthasiddhi ate the fruit and died at once, whereas Chandragupta ate the fruit and was as healthy as ever, to Rakshasa's great astonishment. Soon, a messenger came and announced the death of Sarvarthasiddhi after

2. *Badari*.

3. Holy offering.

eating some jujube fruit. Rakshasa was desolate with grief at this cunning exchange which had made the poison recoil on his own head.

He then began to intrigue with Poros, promising to make him sole King of Magadha, if he would join in a conspiracy to murder Chandragupta. The ambitious Poros agreed to become sole King of Magadha, but refused to be a party to the murder of Chandragupta. "He is my niece's husband. He was also my guest. We can foil him. Why kill him?" asked he. Rakshasa pretended to be satisfied, but he resolved to kill Chandragupta without telling Poros. He made Jeevasiddhi get him a maiden of the most exquisite beauty to be presented to Chandragupta as his handmaid on his accession to the throne, as was the immemorial custom. No man on earth could resist her attraction, and Jeevasiddhi assured Rakshasa that her whole body was so saturated with poison that relations with her would kill her partner forthwith. To make assurance doubly sure, Rakshasa further made Jeevasiddhi give the maiden a deadly powder to be slyly put into the drink, when it was to be given to her lover. Then he took the enchanting maiden to the Palace where Chandragupta and Poros were camping. He had not told Poros a word of all this, lest he should reveal the secret to Chandragupta or Chanakya in his aversion to the murder of his relative and friend.

Unfortunately for him, Jeevasiddhi had sent detailed information to Chanakya. When Rakshasa went to the Palace he found Chandragupta and Poros sitting on two thrones, and Chanakya and Rajasena near by. Poros was dead drunk with the exquisite Greek wines, of which he kept a good stock, and was in a very good mood, having been highly flattered and humoured by Chandragupta and

Chanakya. He was loudly proclaiming that he loved Chandragupta like his own son Malayaketu, and would be prepared to give him anything in his power, for the mere asking. So, when Rakshasa presented the captivating maid to Chandragupta, and Poros was gazing at her admiringly and yearningly, Chanakya asked Chandragupta to give her to his brother Poros unasked, just to show that he was no whit behind in his readiness to part with priceless things.

Chandragupta readily gave her to Poros, who at once took leave of the rest and went with her to his bed-chamber after thanking Chandragupta and Chanakya, incoherently, in the height of his gratitude. Rakshasa was a helpless spectator of this strange miscarriage of his murder-plot. He could not tell Poros in the presence of Chanakya and Chandragupta that the man who took the poison-maid was taking death as partner. He took a dismal and cheerless farewell, and went home after having been forced to listen to an hour's vivacious talk by Chanakya, who wanted to make sure that the poison-maid was not interrupted in her deadly work.

The next morning Poros was found dead, and the poison-maid absconding. There was panic among the followers of Poros. Chanakya had it publicly given out that Rakshasa had got Poros murdered through the poison-maiden, as he was the most formidable opponent to his plans. Rakshasa got afraid, especially as he had himself sent the poison-maid, though with the intention of killing Chandragupta and not Poros. He lost his head, and fled from Pataliputra in panic, having left his wife and son in the house of his trusted friend, the rich diamond-merchant Chandanadasa. Chanakya's spies knew of his flight, but did not do anything to prevent it, because the capture and punishment of Rakshasa would have raised many embaras-

sing problems and roused much discontent among the citizens of Pataliputra, while his flight from the City would leave the supporters of the Nandas without a wise and fearless leader, and would allow Chanakya a clear field for his plans and operations.

Chanakya had resolved to kill Poros and Vairochaka for their secret plotting with Rakshasa against Chandragupta. He had also resolved to get rid of Malayaketu. Now Poros was dead. The other two remained. Of those, Vairochaka, the intriguing and clever young man, required more immediate attention than the inexperienced and inefficient boy, Malayaketu. After allowing Rakshasa to escape unmolested, Chanakya went to Rakshasa's house with the infuriated troops of Poros and surrounded it. The house was found deserted. Rakshasa's flight confirmed Chanakya's story that Rakshasa was the person who got the great Parvateswara killed by means of the poison-maid. At the same time Chanakya made his spy Bhagurayana tell the frightened and bewildered Malayaketu secretly, that it was Chanakya who had got Parvateswara killed and that he would soon devise some infernal plan to kill him also, and induced him to flee instantly to his own kingdom and escape, and then consider ways and means of avenging himself on Chandragupta and Chanakya. Malayaketu did not require any further persuasion, but fled to Boukephala with a few faithful followers, without even performing the funeral ceremonies of his father. Chanakya did not try to prevent this escape also. It came in very handy for his plans.

His spies had told him that Daruvarman, the Master-Carpenter of Pataliputra, was suspected of being in league with Rakshasa and had prepared a golden arch for the occasion of the State-entry of Chandragupta into 'Suganga' Palace for the Coronation, even before being asked to do so.

They had also told Chanakya that Vairavaraka, the Head-Mahout of Magadha and the person entitled to be the Mahout of Chandragupta's elephant *Chandralekha* on the occasion of the State-entry, was suspected of being in league with Rakshasa. He resolved at once to utilise the occasion for getting rid of Vairochaka without any blame or trouble to himself. He told Vairochaka secretly, "The silly boy has escaped, thinking that I got Parvateswara killed and would soon get him also killed. But, if I had got Parvateswara killed, would I have allowed this boy to escape? Was it not the easiest thing for me to have caught the boy and killed him when he was fleeing with his followers? Anyhow, what has happened is for the best. Instead of the inexperienced Malayaketu being made the Joint-King of Magadha, we shall be getting an experienced person in you. You have also no other kingdom to attend to. You can therefore devote your whole attention to this kingdom. The subjects may raise two objections, firstly that the kingdom should not be divided, that no foreigner should be given any part of it, and that the promise to give half to Parvateswara lapsed with his death, and secondly that even if the promise held good after his death, it is his son Malayaketu who should get his half and not you. Therefore, we must proceed by a stratagem and face them with a *fait accompli*. I shall announce that Parvateswara having died, and Malayaketu having fled, the question of the promise to Parvateswara would be considered later, but that Chandragupta would be crowned now. Then, I shall dress you up in Chandragupta's robes and deck you with his ornaments, and seat you on Chandragupta's elephant *Chandralekha*. So you shall be crowned as Chandragupta. As soon as that is done, I shall announce your real identity, and get you recognized as

King of half the kingdom. Chandragupta will thereafter be crowned as King of the other half."

The plan sounded excellent to Vairochaka. Indeed, in his cunning, he fancied that he could even become sole King of Magadha and shut out Chandragupta altogether. He stipulated with Chanakya that Parvateswara's troops should be sent along with him. Chanakya readily agreed.

Vairochaka was dressed in Chandragupta's robes and decked with his ornaments, and seated on *Chandralekha*. He looked very like Chandragupta in the uncertain light of the torches. Everybody including Vairavaraka and Daruvarman took him to be Chandragupta. The troops of Parvateswara were near him, being given the place of honour, as allies. The Magadhan troops also followed. While Parvateswara's troops were in a festive mood and not armed for a fight or prepared for it, the Magadhan troops under Bhadrabhata, Purushadatta, Dingarata, Balagupta, Rajasena, Simhabala, Bhagurayana and Chandrabhanu were secretly armed to the teeth in order that they might fall upon Parvateswara's troops on a signal from Chanakya.

The glorious procession with Vairochaka on *Chandralekha* passed along the streets to 'Suganga' Palace in a most imposing manner, with the blare of trumpets and the flare of torchlights. Thousands thronged the streets to watch it. At last the golden arch put up by Daruvarman in front of 'Suganga' Palace was reached. Daruvarman was on the top of it with his friends waving triumphal flags, but ready to drop the treacherous collapsible arch on the supposed Chandragupta and kill him with it instantaneously as if by accident. But Vairavaraka saw him, knew what he was up to, and wanted to forestall

him and get the credit for the deed and the consequent reward from Rakshasa. Just as the elephant was about to cross the arch, he drew out his dagger to stab the supposed Chandragupta. The elephant *Chandralekha* was frightened at this sudden act, and slackened its pace. Daruvarman had timed that the fall of the arch should be at the moment when Chandragupta would be directly under the arch. Owing to the elephant's slackened pace, the heavy arch fell on Vairavaraka's head and killed him. The dismayed Daruvarman jumped on to *Chandralekha's* back with an axe, and killed the supposed Chandragupta with it.

The soldiers of Parvateswara beat Daruvarman to death, and then fell on the unarmed citizens and began killing them in the frenzy of their rage. The helpless citizens appealed to Chanakya for protection. Chanakya then asked Chandragupta's troops to attack the unprepared soldiers of Parvateswara who were routed with great slaughter. Then he announced that the man killed by Daruvarman was Vairochaka, and not Chandragupta. The citizens received this news with acclamation, and went in their thousands to escort Chandragupta to 'Suganga' Palace for being crowned. Their former apathy was gone. Their only hope of preserving their lives, goods and culture from the barbarians lay in crowning their own Prince Chandragupta.

With the greatest enthusiasm they took him along the streets surrounded by his victorious troops. A thousand flags bearing the Crest newly invented by him and Chanakya, namely, the Moon rising above the mountain and a peacock dancing in the foreground, symbolical of the triumph of Chandragupta and the Mauryas over Parvateswara, waved in the light of the blazing torches, elephants trumpeted, horses neighed, and innumerable ladies uttered the aus-

picious '*ulu ulu*' cry as Chandragupta entered the 'Suganga' Palace on his elephant *Chandralekha* and was informally crowned King of Magadha. There were deafening cries of 'Long Live the King! Victory to the King!' as Chanakya seated Chandragupta on the lion-emblemed throne of Magadha and placed the Crown of Mândhâta on his head. "The formal Coronation will take place next month in the presence of all our feudatory Kings and Princes and peoples," said Chanakya. "This is simply the election of the people, the famous *Janapada*[4] of Magadha. The coining of *Suvarnas* and *Rupyarupyas*[5] by the State Goldsmiths will begin from to-day."

Chandragupta and Chanakya sent the King of Kalinga back the next day after ratifying the original treaty, and loading him with presents including a large number of the new coins. The Kings of Kamarupa and Manjupatan were also sent away with gifts of ten-million *Suvarnas* each, in return for which they readily agreed to evacuate forthwith all Magadhan territories occupied by them and to remain for ever the allies of the Kings of Magadha.

That evening Chandragupta sent Rajasena to Chanakya's house with a hundred-thousand *Suvarnas* as a small token of his gratitude, and with a message that a fine palace had

4. The assembly of the people.

5. The Mauryan coinage still continues in India almost unchanged, except that the Sovereign has taken the place of the *Suvarna*. The *Suvarna* was a gold coin (with copper alloy) worth about Rs. 10. The *Rupyarupya* (or rupee) was also called the *Pana* or *Karshapana*, and was a silver coin (with copper and lead alloy) worth roughly from twelve annas to one rupee. The *Masha* represented one-sixteenth of a rupee, or the modern anna. The quarter-anna was represented by the *Kakani* or *Kani*, which latter term is still used for it in the Andhra country which was formerly subject to the Mauryas.

been got ready for his immediate occupation, and that he should move into it at once as the dilapidated house in which he was living was not suitable for the residence of the Prime Minister of a great Empire. Chanakya was away for a bath in the *Ganges*. Rajasena left the money and message behind with Gautami. "You will have to come and take them back," said she smiling. "I shall never take them back," said Rajasena. "Then the 'Aryaputra' will have to bring them back to the Palace," said she laughing.

Chanakya returned in an hour, and was told by Gautami about the money and message, and her remarks to Rajasena. He smiled, took the money and proceeded to the Palace. He went straight to the Emperor and returned them, saying, "Vrishala, what use have I for gold or riches? Nor do I want a palace to live in. My humble abode is enough for me. We can use all this gold for the relief of the poor." "I expected this," said Chandragupta. "Great souls like you never want anything for themselves. But, as a King, I cannot take back what I have given away. Pray suggest some way out." "Spend the money on feeding poor scholars all over the Empire, and especially at Pataliputra, Benares and Takshasila." "All right," said Chandragupta. "Twice the amount will be allotted for it. Now I want to give something to the Venerable Gautami in commemoration of this happy event." "Yes, but give her only what she asks for," said Chanakya, knowing the extremely simple and non-covetous nature of his wife.

They went to Chanakya's house. The Emperor asked Gautami to choose some present. She said at once, "I want nothing for the use of myself or my husband. But he is doing daily *Puja*, and it seems to me that such a Great Man should use in the service of God a silver *Panchapatram*[6]

6. Tumbler.

and *Uddharani*[7], instead of the copper ones he is using now. Your Majesty can give them to me if you like." "Excellent," said Chandragupta. "The venerable Chanakya cannot object to this at all," and returned to the Palace and sent a fine silver *Panchapatram* and *Uddharani*. He told Sântavati about the episode that night. Sântavati admired greatly the unselfish nature of Chanakya and Gautami. "My lord," said she, "I now see that he is the soul of unselfishness, and that he does everything for what he considers to be the public welfare, and never for any private advantage. So, I have forgiven him for what I considered his cruel treatment of my uncles and cousin."

"He did what he did, so that I may be crowned," said Chandragupta.

"Yes, I knew that. Only, till now, I thought that he had you crowned in order to accomplish his vow and satisfy his vanity. Now I see that his vow itself was undertaken in public interests, and not for satisfying his vanity or for wreaking his private vengeance, and I rejoice at it," said Sântavati.

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7. Libation spoon.

CHAPTER XXIV

TRAITORS PAY

A week after the informal Coronation, Chanakya held a secret conference in the private room of the Prime Minister in 'Suganga' Palace with Vaihinari, the Lord Chamberlain, Rajasena, the head of the Palace and harem-guard, Balagupta, the Palace Superintendent, Dingarata, head of the Palace Police, Bhagurayana, the head of the Palace spies, and Chandrabhanu, the Chief Transportation Officer. He said to them, "I have called you to inform you of the measures taken to protect the person of the King from all possible enemies. First of all, tell me whether you have carried out the instructions I gave you this morning." "Yes," said Rajasena. "I have sent away from the bodyguard and the harem-guard all foreigners and those who have earned neither rewards nor honours from His Majesty, and also those of our own countrymen who were suspected of being secretly inimical to the King." "I too have taken every precaution against fire, accidental or intentional, and have also seen to it that no poisonous snakes enter or are introduced into the Palace," said Balagupta. "The selected cooks are all reliable men, and the head-cook partakes of the dishes in my presence before

taking them to the King. I have requested his Majesty also to taste the dishes only after making an oblation first to Fire, and next to the birds. I have kept a number of fine parrots and *Kokils* ready for that purpose. On rising, His Majesty will be received by troops of women armed with bows and arrows. In the second room he will be received by me, and given his coat. In the third room he will be received by dwarfs and crooked persons. In the fourth room his ministers and kinsmen will receive him in the presence of door-keepers armed with barbed missiles. All the door-keepers and members of the female-guard are trusted persons of approved loyalty personally selected by me and Balagupta," said Vaihinari. "I have made proper arrangements for watching every man coming in or going out," said Dingarata. "I have kept a complete file of the antecedents of all the persons serving His Majesty," said Bhagurayana. "The workmen and porters are all trustworthy men," said Chandrabhanu. "Have the harem-servants been carefully selected?" asked Chanakya. "Yes," said Vaihinari. "I have personally seen to it." "All right," said Chanakya. "I only request all of you to keep your eyes open always. Our enemies are resourceful. We have not been able to weed out all the supporters of the Nandas. Many of their former servants have taken service under Chandragupta, and sworn fidelity to him. They require to be carefully watched. It will be difficult to refuse to accept such offers of loyalty, because any change of King involves such wholesale taking over of hundreds of permanent officials. Most of them are not worth worrying about, as they fall in with any regime; a few will be really sincere in their conversion and actively helpful; but, a few will also be simply waiting for an opportunity to strike at us secretly and effectively. Watch carefully, and let me know at once anything suspicious, or strange, or calling for

inquiry. Never mind if most of the suspicions fizzle out on inquiry. The inquiries made will not be wasted. They will keep us in proper trim. Without such perpetual carefulness, we may be caught off our guard." Every one of them promised to be careful, and then dispersed.

The next day, Chandragupta had a slight attack of diarrhœa. The Palace Physician, Abhayadatta, at once prepared his well-known specific for it, and took it to the King in a golden bowl. Chandragupta suspected nothing at all, and held out his hand for it. But Chanakya too was there. It seemed to him that there was a slight and suspicious haziness and discoloration on the sides of the golden bowl. He said to Abhayadatta, "Give it to me before giving it to the King. Why are the sides discoloured?" Abhayadatta's nerves gave way, and his hand trembled as he handed over the medicine to Chanakya. Chanakya poured a little bit into a small dish, and gave it to a parrot which died instantly. "You have mixed a deadly poison in this, Abhayadatta," said Chanakya to him quietly. "Drink the contents of the bowl at once, or be prepared to be dragged by *Chandalas*[1] to the hanging place, and hacked to death limb by limb." Abhayadatta drank the contents without demur, and fell down dead. "Thus perishes one of the greatest doctors of our time," said Chanakya to Rajasena. "I had hoped that he had sincerely resolved to serve us faithfully. Nor would it have been prudent to have dismissed or punished him without proof. He was so popular. Of course, I did not want him, even after this traitorous act, to be done to death like a common criminal. Something is due to knowledge and learning. But, doctors, trying to murder their patients by medicines, must die. Remove his corpse and hand it over to his

1. Low-caste hangmen.

relatives for a proper funeral. They cannot complain now as he died by drinking his own poison."

Two days thereafter, Rajasena reported to him that Pramodaka, the officer-in-charge of the King's bed-chamber, had suddenly become extravagant, and appeared to be in possession of immense funds from a mysterious source. Bhagurayana and Dingarata too confirmed this. Chanakya asked his spy Udumbara to take to Pramodaka ten-thousand gold *Panas* as if from Rakshasa, but to ask him before handing over the amount to explain why he had not accomplished the object yet, and was simply dissipating the money received in advance on extravagant pleasures. Pramodaka fell into the trap, and told Udumbara that he was simply waiting for a favourable opportunity, and would be murdering Chandragupta on the very next night when the demon Chanakya would be away from the town to perform the annual ceremony of his mother Devaki, who had died the previous year. He was then given the ten-thousand *Panas* by Udumbara, and arrested and taken to Chanakya, who had him put to death by torture, and had his entire property confiscated and distributed between Rajasena, Dingarata, Bhagurayana and Udumbara.

Five days later, Balagupta, Dingarata, Rajasena, Bhagurayana and Chanakya saw, on their daily inspection of every room in the Palace, a line of ants with particles of food in their mouths emerging from a crevice between the wall and the flooring in the magnificent ground-floor bed-room of Chandragupta. Nobody took any notice of it except Chanakya. His suspicions were roused, because there were no foodstuffs or provisions in the bed-room, and so the ants must have got them from some hidden store underneath. Yet none of them knew of any basement room there. Chanakya tapped the floor gently, and detected a hollow

sound indicative of the existence of a tunnel underneath. He asked Bhagurayana, Dingarata and Balagupta to go and watch the precincts, and prevent the escape of the hidden assassins by any outlets they might have made. Then he and Rajasena had the floor dug up. Sure enough, there was a tunnel underneath. In it were found Bibhatsaka and two others, all Rakshasa's men, armed with assassins' daggers, and provided with plenty of rice, meat and other dainties to while away their time till the night came. Chanakya had them burnt alive in that very tunnel. Thereafter, he ordered that Chandragupta should sleep in a different bed-room every night, and had eight different bed-rooms in the Palace always ready for occupation. "I shall tell the King every evening in which bed-room to sleep," said he. Rakshasa's bed-room-assassins ceased to trouble Chanakya after that.

A fortnight later, a great astrologer went to Chandragupta, and gave out many events of the past accurately. Chanakya's suspicions were roused. So, he asked Rajasena to watch him carefully, and be ready for all emergencies. After the usual predictions from horoscopy were over, the man pretended to be a great expert in Palmistry also, and requested to be allowed to see the Emperor's hand. When Chandragupta stretched forth his hand, the astrologer approached near as if to scrutinise the markings on the palm, but suddenly pulled out a dagger from his clothes and raised his arm to strike at Chandragupta's chest. Chandragupta with great presence of mind, caught his arm firmly before the blow could descend, and Rajasena ran his sword through the mock-astrologer who fell down dead. "The fool's astrology didn't tell him this," said Chanakya. "Nor did his commonsense tell him that if he were to strike suddenly with a dagger, he should have struck at the abdomen by an upward stroke rather than at the chest by a down-

ward stroke, when his arm could have been easily caught and the act prevented," said Chandragupta. Thereafter, Chanakya had every man's person searched before he was allowed near the King.

A month later, a party of twelve horse-dealers went to the Emperor stating that they had a number of very fine Aratti, Saindhava, Kambhoja and Vanayu horses, and that the Emperor, a connoisseur of horses, might select some. Chandragupta, accompanied by Chanakya, Balagupta, Rajasena, and Purushadatta went to see them. They were excellent animals. But, no sooner had Chandragupta begun to examine them than all the horse-dealers took up arms concealed in the stables, and attacked Chandragupta and his men suddenly. Chandragupta was an expert horse-man, and mounted one of the horses and rode off as directed by Chanakya. Chanakya, Balagupta, Purushadatta and Rajasena fought with the disappointed horse-dealers, who were afraid of the Emperor's bringing aid, and so mounted their horses and bolted. But Chandragupta sent a cavalry division after them under Purushadatta, and all of them were caugh and executed with torture. "Hereafter, Purushadatta shal examine all horses and bring them to the Emperor for approval," said Chanakya.

Six weeks later, when Chandragupta was worshipping at the Sankarshana temple in the Palace, the Brahmin priest gave him some sacred water mingled with a deadly poison. But Sonottara had seen the Brahmin look into the gold bowl to see if any sediment remained. So, she snatched the bowl from Chandragupta and gave it to a cat, which died at once. Chanakya had the Brahmin drowned in the *Ganges* for high treason. The Emperor was also requested not to take even temple-offerings without offering them to some bird or beast, or making the priest partake of them himself.

A week later, one night, a monkey with a large quantity of inflammable material tied to its tail was made to get on to the roof of the Palace after the tail had been ingnited. The poor thing jumped from place to place on the roof in its fright, confusion and pain, setting fire to several portions of the building. Fortunately, there was no wind, and the fire did not spread. Chandragupta and Chanakya woke up on an alarm being raised by Bhagurayana, and the fire was put out soon. The owner of the monkey, who was found lurking in the Palace grounds, was burnt to death then and there. Balagupta was asked to keep an eye on monkeys also thereafter.

A few days later, when the Emperor went out to attend a sacrifice, the officiating Brahmin seated him on a cushion near the wall. Soon the Emperor heard something hissing. Turning round he found a full-grown cobra with its hood spread and ready to strike. He sprang forward, and the cobra bit the cushion instead. It was taken and killed. The Brahmin was put into a cage full of poisonous cobras, vipers and scorpions which soon killed him. Rajasena was directed to examine the King's seating arrangements in advance.

Thus, by the supreme vigilance of Chanakya and his able assistants, every one of Rakshasa's plots to kill Chandragupta failed. The stern punishments meted out to the traitors made it impossible for Rakshasa to secure any more assassins. The precautions adopted rendered further attempts useless. So, Rakshasa was forced to turn from assassination to open war for effecting his object of dethroning Chandragupta and killing him and Chanakya. He devoted all his phenomenal energy to the furtherance of the new mode of attack.

CHAPTER XXV

THE NET IS SPREAD

TWO months after the incidents narrated in the previous Chapter happened, Chanakya sat in the private room of Chandragupta in the 'Suganga' Palace discussing state affairs. "Rakshasa's persistence and loyalty are indeed wonderful. I thought that he would give up all his efforts as soon as the last of the Nandas was dead. That is why I saw to it that the Nandas were completely wiped out of existence. But, even after that, and after the failure of all his murder-plots, Rakshasa's efforts have not slackened. The latest news is that he has stirred up Malayaketu, who was already wroth against us because of his father Parvataka's death, by promising him our entire kingdom. Assisted by Chitravarman of Kuluta, Simhanada of Malaya, Pushkaraksha of Kashmir, Susena of Sind, and Meghanada the Persian, and the hosts of the Gandharas, Yavanas, Kambhojas, Sakas, Hutas and Kiratas, Malayaketu and Rakshasa will soon march on Pataliputra," said Chanakya. "This is serious," said Chandragupta. "What do you propose to do?"

"Pooh, all this is not going to worry the man who, unaided, vowed to destroy the Nanda race, root and branch,

and accomplished that vow. The fire of my anger burnt down all the branches of the Nandas, numerous like bamboo shoots. Only the subjects, who were like frightened birds, were left untouched. People who cried 'Shame' in their heart of hearts when they saw me dragged away from the seat of honour, have now seen the Nanda King hurled down from his throne like a lord of elephants from the mountain-top by a lion. I have fulfilled my double duty. My anger has burnt itself out by their destruction, and my love has been satisfied by your being crowned and firmly established on the Imperial throne of Pataliputra. But, my anger has burnt out like the forest-fire, not because of weakness but simply because of lack of further materials to burn. Now I see more materials coming my way, and the fire must burn again and do its destined work. Till I win over Rakshasa and make him your minister, and crush these Chieftains, my work will remain unfinished. But these things are but child's play for Kautalya. These deluded Chieftains are verily jumping into the mouth of a lion, whose jaws have been dyed with the blood of many elephants far more powerful than the puny ones now facing it. Why do these doomed men desire my hair to be still sprawling about in the wind, instead of being tied up? These do not know the measure of their own strength as against mine, and are simply rushing to their destruction like moths rushing to a flame."

"I have no doubt of that, sir. But, tell me why you want to win over Rakshasa and make him my minister, instead of destroying him like the rest," asked Chandragupta."

"Because he is a gem among men, and, once won over to us and by his own conviction, he will be a tower of strength to us. His loyalty is wonderful. Ordinary men

serve their lords so long as they continue to be Kings. Those who follow Kings in exile do so in the hope of a restoration and rewards to be gained in future. Rare are men like Rakshasa who remember their past favours and work against their Kings' foes out of mere disinterested devotion, even after the complete and irrevocable destruction of the lines of their Kings. Such men, Oh Chandra, should be won over and not killed like the worthless forest and hill Chiefs, who are like the weeds found everywhere and deserve only destruction when found noxious."

"But, sir, I wish you to be my Prime Minister always; Rakshasa will be but a poor substitute," said Chandragupta.

Chanakya's face lighted up just a little with joy as he said, "Chandra, I shall be always available when you want me, like medicine for a sick man. But I cannot be your routine Prime Minister. I have got my work as a teacher and man of religion. Rakshasa will be an excellent Prime Minister. Besides, he is a Magadha among the Magadhas, and his ancestors have served the Kings of Magadha, for many generations. Such a man will be an asset as a minister, and will put out the last embers of discontent among your subjects."

"But, how can I have full confidence in him who has fought against me so often and sought my life in every possible way?"

"That is inevitable in politics. The foes of yesterday will be the friends of to-day. A king must deal with his people according to the existing circumstances," said Chanakya.

"That means that he can never treat one as a complete friend lest he should become a foe one day, and can never

treat one as a complete foe lest he should become a friend one day?" asked Chandragupta.

"That is so. Only a fool trusts one always and implicitly in politics. That is why kings must keep themselves fully informed by spies, of whom there must be three different sets each independent of the other. But I can assure you that Rakshasa will be all right, once he is really won over. Indeed, there is not one among your other ministers of half his worth. His bravery, intelligence and devotion are unparalleled. That he served your former foes should be no disqualification by itself. Kings change, but the people and the government servants do not. But, why do I talk of all this now when he is still our bitter foe, trying his best to crush us? Let us first foil all his plans and root out his allies, and annex all their territory."

"Sir, may I know what steps you have already taken."
"Certainly. My net is almost spread. I have spread a rumour far and near that Parvateswara, our most steadfast ally, was killed by Rakshasa by sending that charming poison-maiden, thinking that he would cause irreparable loss to me by killing one of my two main props, Parvateswara or you. You know that I myself asked Bhagurayana to spirit away Malayaketu to a place of safety by telling him that I was the cause of Parvateswara's death. We had your Coronation to be celebrated then. It would have been inconvenient if Malayaketu was hovering about here at that time after our promise to give his father half the kingdom. I wanted also to give the avaricious and intriguing Vairochaka his deserts. But I used Malayaketu's flight to prove that we had no hand in Parvateswara's death by instructing the spies to ask people whether, if we had purposely got Parvateswara killed, we would have allowed

his son to escape. The inexperienced and simple Malayaketu offers no great problem. He is too insignificant even to be killed. We can thwart all his plans easily. Our spies have already found out the two arch conspirators employed by Rakshasa in our city, Sakatadasa and Chandanadasa. I shall round them up soon, and utilise them for our own ends in some cunning way or other. I have already done away with Abhayadatta, Praviraka, Bibhatsaka and others. Bhagurayana, Bhadrabhata, Purushadatta, Dingarata, Balagupta, Rajasena, Lohitaksha and Vijayavarman, all tried and devoted adherents of ours, will desert to the enemy on the plausible pretext of disgust at my tyrannical orders regarding Sakatadasa, Chandanadasa and themselves. They and Jeevasiddhi, who has done so mueh already for us, will induce Rakshasa to march boldly on Pataliputra. We shall encourage the enemy by frequent bickerings between you and me. Finally, we shall stage, on the *Kaumudi* festival day, an irrevocable quarrel. I shall cancel the observance of the *Kaumudi* festival contrary to your express orders, and you will dismiss me with words of withering contempt and smouldering hatred. These quarrels and the dismissal will be used by our agents with Malayaketu, for creating suspicions in the mind of Malayaketu about Rakshasa's sympathy for you and desire to desert Malayaketu and take up your Prime Ministership. I shall also arrange for his suspecting his five royal allies and killing them. To deal with the rest will be child's play." "It will not be easy to insult and dismiss you even in joke," said Chandragupta. "But that is essential, and will have to be done. Act it well. I shall let you know my detailed plans from time to time," said Chanakya.

Sonottara then knocked at the door and entered. She said to Chandragupta, "Her Majesty, Empress Santavati,

desires to see the venerable Chanakya!" "I shall be honoured," said Chanakya. "Show her in," said Chandragupta. Sonottara went out and soon came back with the Empress Santavati, and then went away closing the door. Santavati bowed to her husband and Chanakya, and then sat down on a rich cushion with tears glistening in her eyes. "Child, what is the matter?" asked Chanakya. "Oh, I forgot to tell you one fact," said Chandragupta. "I had her horoscope sent to the Court Astrologer. He predicted that the Empress will have no children." "He deserves to be whipped," said Chanakya. "He may be even a spy of Rakshasa. I shall deal with him suitably." "But, Sir, he may be right. Why should he be unjustly punished for my *Karma*?" asked Santavati. "Nonsense!" said Chanakya. "Even if what he said was to be true, he deserves to be punished for uttering such an inauspicious thing. He is not paid for creating sorrow. We can't stand such predictions, especially at this juncture. He must be replaced by a better man, and that forthwith. But, don't grieve about this silly prediction of this fool. I have myself had Chandra's horoscope cast by a great Sage. He told me that Chandra will have a glorious son, and a still more glorious grandson, and that his line will rule for several generations. That cannot be wrong." Santavati wiped her tears and said. "You have re-assured me. So long as the royal line of my husband is safe, I am happy." Then she retired after bowing again to her husband and to Chanakya. Soon after she left them, Chanakya too look leave of Chandragupta. He said, "You will get sealed letters from me about the developments from time to time. Sarangarava will bring them." "What a simpleton your pupil Sarangarava is!" said Chandragupta. "He is a simple and loyal soul, but by no means devoid of intelligence. It is cunning he lacks. He never speaks

a lie." Then Chanakya proceeded in the state palanquin to his modest house in the Brahmin street. People on the way looked at him admiringly. An old man stroked his beard and told some by-standers, "There goes the great Chanakya. So long as Chanakya is alive and on good terms with the Emperor, we have nothing to fear from any enemies. All will be caught in his toils."

Chanakya reached his house, sent away his palanquin, and asked his pupil Sarangarava, who was sitting on the verandah, not to let any stranger go in without his permission. Then he went in alone, and had his bath, prayers and simple noon-meal served by Gautami herself. As he took his favourite *mulagatawny* soup with *pappods*, he told her about the Palace Astrologer and the need for his replacement. "That is politics," he added, on seeing the look of surprise on her face. "A king does not pay an astrologer for uttering such unpleasant things. Its truth or otherwise is immaterial, as the man himself cannot be said to know it." "Your theories are above me. I know only our ancient stories which teach unfaltering devotion unto death to one's husband who is to be treated as a God. So, whatever you do is right for me," said Gautami. "That teaching is enough for women to secure this world and the next. They will have better peace of mind that way, than by following the crooked ways of kings and statesmen. Indeed, without such women we shall be undone. We trust none outside our home. Should we not have some one in our home whom we can trust implicitly? In return we feed, protect and love them in prosperity and adversity," said Chanakya. He finished his meal with curds and rice, and green pepper-pickles which he relished immensely. He then went and sat in a room near the door, perusing the reports already received from

the officers and spies from the countryside, while Gautami took her food.

A bard came along the street with a painting of Yama, the God of Death, mounted on a fierce-looking water-buffalo. He stood in front of Chanakya's house and cried out. "Bow down and worship Yama! What is the use of praying to the other deities when they are all powerless to prevent their worshippers from being taken away by Yama? Besides, Yama is not such a terrible deity as people think. I make my living by singing his praises. So he who gives death to others gives me life. I shall enter this house and sing the glories of Yama." He went up to the door. Sarangarava saw him and said: "Good man, you should not enter."

"Why, whose house is this?" asked the bard. "Of my preceptor, the venerable Chanakya," said Sarangarava. The bard smiled and said, "Oh, then, it belongs to a devotee of the God of Death like me. Allow me to go in and tell him something about the God of Death." Sarangarava said angrily, "Fool, do you presume to teach my preceptor?" "Sir, don't get angry. Everybody cannot know everything. Even your preceptor may learn certain things he does not know from me," said the other. "Blockhead, you don't know the venerable Chanakya. Is there any subject where he can be taught anything by such as you?" asked Sarangarava. "Yes. He will know that himself if he is as wise as you say he is. Go and ask him by whom the Moon[1] is not liked," said the bard. "Of what use is this absurd knowledge? What does it matter who likes the Moon and who doesn't?" asked Sarangarava. "Your preceptor will know of what use it

1. A pun on the name 'Chandragupta.'

is. Meanwhile, know this much, that lotuses do not like the Moon. Though full-orbed like the Moon, these lovely things hate the Moon," replied the other.

Chanakya, from his place, listened to this conversation, and knew at once that it must be Nipunaka, one of his spies, come to tell him about the malcontents in the kingdom. So, while Sarangarava was telling the man, "Go away, you fool, and retail all this nonsense elsewhere," he went and said to the man, "Come in, my man, and tell me what you know. I know enough not to despise knowledge from whatever source." Then he took him into his private room. There he asked him. "Are all the subjects contented?" "Sir, by your wise government and proper remedies, the hearts of all the subjects have been won over. Only those persistent enemies who cannot be won over by good government or conciliation are still disaffected towards the King. There are three such people in this city."

"Who are they, those destined to premature death?" asked Chanakya. "The first is a Buddist mendicant called Jeevasiddhi, a terrible sorcerer and a man most devoutly attached to Rakshasa and implicitly trusted by him. It is this man who induced Rakshasa to send the poison-maiden and cause Parvateswara's death. He is our implacable enemy," said Nipunaka. Chanakya was glad to hear of his own spy's ignorance of Jeevasiddhi's real character, but pretended to be angry, and said, "That man will in time get his deserts from me. Who are the other two?" "The second is a Kayastha petition-writer, called Sakatadasa." Chanakya said to himself, "A Kayastha is of little account. There is a limit to what a clerk can do. But still, he too must be borne in mind." Then he asked Nipunaka, "Who is the third?" "The third is Chandanadasa, the

principal jeweller of this city, and an intimate friend of Rakshasa who has left his wife and child with him."

"What!" exclaimed Chanakya, "How did you discover that?" Nipunaka was overjoyed at this appreciation of his discovery by his master, and triumphantly took from his loin-cloth a ring and said, "May it please Your Excellency, here is the signet-ring of Rakshasa." Chanakya took it eagerly and examined it, and saw that it was really Rakshasa's signet-ring with his name clearly inscribed on it. He said to himself, "The war is won before it is begun." Then he asked Nipunaka, "Tell me in detail how you came by this."

Nipunaka said, "According to your orders, I set out to discover who the discontented persons in this great city were. I put on this disguise which enabled me to enter any house without exciting suspicion. I entered the house of Chandanadasa, and began to sing my songs. A boy of five, of noble mien indicating a very high ancestry, rushed out suddenly to see my picture and hear my songs. A woman cried out from inside the house in a frightened voice, 'Oh, he has gone out!' Then a beautiful lady rushed out and caught the boy just as he emerged out of the door. In her hurry, this ring, made for a man and too big for her delicate finger, slipped off unknown to her, and rolled down to where my left foot was. I quietly put my foot over it and, seeing that the people had all gone inside and shut the door, let fall my painting, as if by accident, and, in picking it up, picked up the ring also and secured it. Then I left, and have brought this ring to you." Chanakya said, "Well-done! Now you may go. You will get a suitable reward before long." Nipunaka left with his painting, and wandered along the street as before for some time and went home.

Soon after this Sonottara was ushered in by Sarangarava. She saluted Chanakya and said, "The Emperor wants your advice as to performing the funeral obsequies of Parvateswara and presenting his jewels to Brahmins." Chanakya was pleased at this diplomatic gesture of Chandragupta and said, "Tell him in my name, 'This is a most proper and excellent idea of which I wholly approve. But the priceless jewels of Parvateswara are to be given only to worthy Brahmins in order to get the best results. I shall myself send you Brahmins of proved worth!" Sonottara bowed and left. Chanakya sent word to Viswavasu and his two brothers to go to Chandragupta and receive Parvataka's jewels, and see him later with those jewels.

Then he got from Sarangarava an inkstand and paper, and thought out for a minute what he should write in order to foil the plans of Rakshasa and Malayaketu. Finally he said to himself: "The greatest strength of Malayaketu is from Chitravarman, King of the Kulutas, Simhanada of Malaya, Pushkaraksha of Kashmir, Sindhusena or Susena of Sind, and the Persian Satrap Magha or Meghanada with his fine cavalry. These are on most intimate terms with Malayaketu. If I make Malayaketu believe that they are secretly plotting against him, and thus cause him to put them to death at once, nothing more need be done to win this war which will win itself. Ah, that is the thing to do. Let me write it down. Nothing can save these five Kings now." He wrote down a draft, and then said to himself: "That won't do. My writing will be familiar to Sakatadasa and will excite suspicion, and ruin the entire plan. Let me adopt some other device. He called Sarangarava and said, "Child, my writing, that of a *Srotriya* Brahmin though done carefully,

is bound to be illegible. So, go and ask Siddharthaka to get a letter written in these terms by Sakatadasa without showing the draft to him, or telling him that Chanakya sent it to him. This is most important. There need be no name of the person sending the letter, or of the recipient." "I shall see to it," said Sarangarava and left. "Malayaketu, you are finished," said Chanakya to himself.

Siddharthaka came in with the letter in an hour. Chanakya perused it carefully. "How beautiful is the man's handwriting!" said he. "Well, it is all right. Seal it with this seal," he said, giving Rakshasa's seal. Siddharthaka did so. "What are your further commands?" he asked. "I want to send you on a special mission," said Chanakya. "It requires a fearless man whom I can implicitly trust. That is why I have chosen you." Siddharthaka's face beamed with joy. "Tell me what it is, and I shall discharge the mission faithfully and well," said he. "I know that," said Chanakya. "I have directed the Magistrates to have Sakatadasa taken to the hanging place secretly this evening by the Chandalas[2] and impaled to death. Go to the place of execution and wait there in hiding till Sakatadasa is brought there. Then frighten the executioners with your drawn sword and a terrific yell, and carry away Sakatadasa to Rakshasa. Rakshasa will reward you for saving his friend. Accept what he gives you and serve him thereafter pretending to be his friend. Deposit this seal with him and present it to him after giving out some plausible story, like finding it near Chandanadasa's door, for your getting possession of it. Pretend to be an enemy of mine, and, when the enemies are near Pataliputra, do as follows." He whispered into

2. low-caste hang-men.

his ear some secret and confidential things. Siddharthaka said, " I shall do so," and left.

Chanakya then called Sarangarava and asked him to tell Kalapasika and Dandapasika, the City Magistrates, that they should carry out the Emperor's orders and drive Jeevasiddhi ignominiously out of the city, after proclaiming to the public his nefarious practices against Chandragupta and Parvateswara, and his sending the poison-maiden to kill Chandragupta or Parvateswara at the bidding of that villain Rakshasa. " I shall do so at once," said Sarangarava and left. He returned in a few minutes and said that Kalapasika and Dandpasika had already arranged to carry out the orders regarding Sakatadasa and Jeevasiddhi.

A few minutes thereafter, Chandanadasa was taken to Chanakya by Sarangarava as directed. Chandanadasa was apprehensive as to what fate was awaiting him for his high treason in conspiring with Rakshasa and harbouring his wife. He was, however, prepared to face death rather than surrender Rakshasa's wife. So, he instructed his wife to remove Rakshasa's wife and child secretly to a trusted friend's house.

When Chandanadasa arrived, Chanakya requested him to be seated on a cushion near him. " The ground is good enough for such as me," said Chandanadasa. " An undeserved honour hurts as much as an intentional insult." " But this honour is not undeserved. Do sit down on this cushion near me," said Chanakya. Chandanadasa did as he was desired. " How is your business ? Is it prospering ?" asked Chanakya politely. " Yes, by your favour," was the reply. " Do not the faults of Chandragupta make you remember the Kings of old and their virtues ?" asked Chanakya. Chandanadasa stopped his ears and said, " God forbid ! All of us are as delighted by His Majesty Chandra-

gupta's reign, as people are by the Full-Moon on an autumn evening." "If so, is it too much for the King to expect something in return from a contented subject?" asked Chanakya. "You may fix any contribution you deem fit," said the merchant. "Chandanadasa, this is the reign of Chandragupta, and not of the Nandas. The greedy Nandas were only pleased with wealth. Chandragupta values much more the contentment and happiness of his subjects," said Chanakya. "I am very pleased to hear that," said the merchant. "But it involves abstention from hostile acts on the part of his subjects," said Chanakya. "Which wretch is hostile to the King?" asked Chandanadasa. "Well, firstly, yourself," said Chanakya coolly. "God forbid!" said Chandanadasa stopping his ears once more. "How can grass fight fire? How can a merchant fight the King?" "Your hostile act does not consist in fighting. You are aiding Rakshasa by keeping his wife in your house. Giving asylum to the wife of the King's deadly enemy is your act of treason," said Chanakya quietly. "It is untrue," said Chandanadasa alarmed. "Don't get alarmed. When revolutions take place and servants of the former Kings flee to other countries, it is quite usual for them to leave their wives in the houses of friends even against their will. That is no offence. It is the continuance of the harbouring and concealment of it that constitutes the offence." "I am relieved to hear that. Rakshasa left his family in my house like that, when he left. His wife was in my house for some time. She has left it now," said Chandandasa. "So you uttered a lie in denying it altogether? Chandragupta punishes all liars severely. Still, if you deliver up the family at once, you may escape," said Chanakya. "Have I not told you that Rakshasa's family was *formerly* in my house?" asked the merchant. "Where have they gone to now?" asked the Minister. I

don't know," said Chandanadasa. Chanakya smiled and said, "How can you be possibly ignorant of it? Do as I ask you, and deliver them up. Danger hovers over your head. The remedy is far away. Don't dream that Rakshasa can uproot Chandragupta as I uprooted the Nandas. He can no more do it than take the prey from the mouth of the angry lion, than deprive the Moon of moonlight. The Nandas were so wicked and perverse that even able Ministers like Nakranasa could not save them."

Just then there was a hubub in the street. Chanakya asked Sarangarava to find out what it was. He returned and said, "Sir, the traitor Jeevasiddhi, the Buddhist monk, is being driven out of the city in disgrace by command of His Majesty Chandragupta." "What a fate!" said Chanakya. Then turning to Chandanadasa he said, "You see what happens to traitors. So, take my advice, the advice of a friend, and surrender Rakshasa's family." "They are not in my house," said Chandanadasa.

At this stage there was another hubbub in the street. Chanakya asked Sarangarava to find out what it was about. Sarangarava came back and said, "Sir, the wretch Sakatadasa, another traitor, is being taken by the hangmen for being impaled." "Let him suffer the just penalty for his treason. You see, merchant, how severe Chandragupta is with traitors. So, surrender the wife and son of another, and save your own wife and children," said Chanakya. "Sir," said Chandanadasa, "Even if they were in my house, I would not have surrendered them whatever be the punishment. Then, how can I surrender them when they are not in my house?" "Is that your considered decision?" asked Chanakya flaring up. "Yes, that is my firm and unalterable resolution," said Chandanadasa. "I am prepared to suffer any punishment awarded to me."

Chanakya was inwardly pleased at this exhibition of rare fidelity and devotion. But, outwardly, he pretended extreme anger and said, "Then, contumacious traitor, experience the King's anger." "I am prepared," said Chandanadasa. "You may award me any sentence." "Sarangarava," said Chanakya, "Go to Kalapasika and Dandapasika and tell them, from me, to put this rascal of a merchant at once in fetters. But, wait. Tell Vijayapala, the Jail Superintendent, to keep this merchant and his wife in jail and to confiscate all his property. I shall tell Chandragupta about this. Let the King himself pass sentence of death on this merchant." Sarangarava took Chandanadasa away.

Chanakya felt immensely satisfied. He felt certain that Rakshasa would be as sure of unhesitatingly sacrificing himself for Chandanadasa, as Chandanadasa was ready to sacrifice himself for Rakshasa's sake.

A few minutes later, Sarangarava returned. Soon there was another uproar in the street. Sarangarava rushed in and told Chanakya that Siddharthaka had turned traitor and had rescued Sakatadasa from the impaling ground, and had escaped with him to join Rakshasa. Chanakya was inwardly delighted, but asked Sarangarava to ask Bhagurayana, the younger brother of General Simhabala, to pursue Siddharthaka and Sakatadasa at once and capure them. Sarangarava returned with the alarming news that Bhagurayana too had turned traitor, and had fled to join Rakshasa. In a rage, Chanakya asked him to order Bhadrabhata, Purushadatta, Dingarata, Balagupta, Rajasena, Lohitaksha and Vijayavarman to pursue Bhagurayana, Siddharthaka and Sakatadasa and bring them. Sarangarava returned with the sensational news that all of them had also fled to join Rakshasa. He said, "The whole town is

agog with the news of these desertions, Sir. They say that Rakshasa is marching on us shortly with a mighty army headed by Malayaketu and assisted by Sindhusena, Pushkaraksha, Simhanada, Chitravarman and Meghanada and by the chiefs of the Sakas, Yavanas, Gandharas, Hutas and Kiratas. Everybody is very anxious about this news."
"Tell them not to be anxious. Let the fellows who have deserted do their worst. Let all others who want to desert to the enemy do so. My intellect has not lost its cunning yet, and can tackle all of them as it tackled the Nandas and their countless hosts. Here, take this letter to Chandragupta." And he wrote a letter to Chandragupta about all the details of the elaborate hoax, and sealed it and gave it to Sarangarava to be delivered to the Emperor in person. Sarangarava delivered it safely.

The next day Chanakya met Chandragupta and explained everything in person. Chandragupta wanted to meet Malayaketu's army at the frontier town of Indraprastha, and to put every fort in the empire in such a condition as to be able to withstand a siege for a year. Chanakya agreed regarding the forts, but persuaded Chandragupta finally that the best plan of campaign would be to wait with their army at Pataliputra, assuring him that most of the enemy troops would melt away by then, owing to his battle of intrigue, and that the rest could be smashed and Malayaketu captured with the aid of their own men parading as his allies. "Will Malayaketu be foolish enough to advance on Pataliputra without capturing the forts on the way?" asked Chandragupta. "I have given Bhagurayana plausible reasons for advocating such a course," said Chanakya, and he spoke of them to Chandragupta who was perfectly satisfied. "So, the net is spread. The birds are sure to be caught," said Chanakya. "I am a bit

sorry, though," said Chandragupta; "there will be no real fight, and there can be no joy in such a victory." "Rejoice that thousands of innocent lives are not destroyed, and that only a few leading men will be wiped out," said Chanakya. He then parted from Chandragupta.

CHAPTER XXVI

A MORNING IN RAKSHASA'S CAMP

FAR away from Pataliputra at Boukephala on the banks of the Hydaspes, the capital of Malayaketu, Rakshasa, the former Prime Minister of the Nandas, was exhibiting the greatest energy in collecting together as many enemies of Chanakya and Chandragupta as he could muster. He was trying his best to win over influential Chiefs and army Captains to his side with lavish gifts and promises. He was now very busy organising the league against Chandragupta, and awaiting the result of his various designs to assassinate him. He had reconciled himself to crowning Malayaketu as the Emperor of Magadha, as all the Nandas had been extirpated and as Malayaketu was the only person who could be deemed great enough to lead a league against Chandragupta and Chanakya. By daily contact with the simple and trusting Malayaketu he also began to love him. "He has none of the lust for women or power like his father, none of the intriguing and cunning disposition of his uncle Vairochaka," he wrote in his letter to Chandanadasa. "He is the abode of trust and can be implicitly relied on."

Rakshasa was spending anxious days of grief, self-reproach and despair. Ever since the extirpation of the Nandas he had left off personal decorations. But, this

morning, Malayaketu's Chamberlain Jajali gave him some ornaments and told him, " Prince Malayaketu is very much grieved to see Your Excellency pining away with grief and refusing to wear any ornaments. He has removed these ornaments from his own person and sent them to you to be worn by you." Rakshasa said, " I shall wear them after I have firmly seated the Prince on the lion-emblemed throne in the ' Suganga ' Palace." " When we have a Prince like Malayaketu, and a Minister like you, what doubt is there that you will succeed ? So, it may be taken as already done, and you may wear these ornaments and thus comply with the first request of the Prince," said Jajali. " All right," said Rakshasa and put them on. The Chamberlain left.

Soon Rakshasa's spy Viradhagupta, in the disguise of a snake-charmer called Jirnavisha, came along and had a private audience with Rakshasa. He had returned from Pataliputra. He told Rakshasa about the fate of Vairochaka, Daruvarman, Vairavaraka, Abhayadatta, Praviraka, Bibhatsaka and his comrades, the astrologer, the horse-dealers, the temple-priest, the monkey-man and the Brahmin sacrificer in great detail. Rakshasa was very much grieved to hear all this and said, " Every thing that I do, not only fails but advances the schemes of Chanakya."

Viradhagupta then told Rakshasa about the driving out of Jeevasiddhi, the imprisonment of Chandanadasa and his wife and the confiscation of his property, and of the order to impale Sakatadasa. Rakshasa's distress knew no bounds. He cried out, " Oh, wretch that I am that I continue to live after these cruel sufferings of my friends ! Oh, friend Sakatadasa, you were but a humble petition-writer, but your heart was of gold, unlike that of mine, the Prime Minister."

Just then, a servant came and announced that Sakatadasa was waiting outside for an audience. Rakshasa was astounded. "What is this, Viradhagupta?" he asked. "Perhaps the man's luck was so great that he managed to escape even from the impaling place," said Viradhagupta. Sakatadasa was called in. He went in with Siddharthaka, and told Rakshasa that Siddharthaka had scared away the hangmen and saved him. "I was taken and placed before the terrible impaling rod, and my bonds were untied. The hangmen tied round my head the garland of death and then, in the sure confidence that nobody would dare to rescue a person in the time of Chandragupta and Chanakya, left me standing by myself near them and beat the drums to announce my execution. At that very moment, friend Siddharthaka emerged suddenly from somewhere, and rushed upon the astonished hangmen with a drawn sword and a terrific yell. They fled, and I was rescued."

Rakshasa embraced Sakatadasa, made him his Private Secretary and seated him near him. He took off the ornaments given to him that morning by Jajali, and gave them to Siddharthaka as a reward for his heroic act. Siddharthaka fell at Rakshasa's feet in gratitude, and asked him to keep them in a sealed deposit till he asked for them. Rakshasa readily agreed, and asked Sakatadasa to take and keep the deposit safe. Siddharthaka put the jewels into a packet, sealed the packet with Rakshasa's signet-ring with him, and handed over the sealed packet to Sakatadasa. Sakatadasa examined the seal and said to Rakshasa aside: "This seal of his has your name inscribed on it." Rakshasa too scrutinised it and said to himself, "Surely, this is the signet-ring which my wife took from me at the time of separation as a keepsake and for ensuring the authenticity of communi-

cations from her. How did this man get it?" He asked Siddharthaka, "Friend, where did you get this ring?" "I found it lying in a street in Pataliputra near the door of one Chandanadasa, a very wealthy merchant," said Siddharthaka. "That is right," said Rakshasa. "What is right?" asked Siddharthaka. "That it should have been found near the house of a rich man," said Rakshasa, unwilling to reveal that his wife had been in that house.

Sakatadasa said to Siddharthaka: "Friend, this ring bears Rakshasa's name on it. Give it to him. He will give you more than its value." "I shall deem it a favour if the Minister will deign to accept it," said Siddharthaka handing it over to Rakshasa. "I cannot take anything for it as the jewels presented to me by the Minister are worth a thousand times more. Only, I have a request to make." "Ask freely," said Rakshasa, pleased with the man. "Your honour knows the demon Chanakya. He will tear me limb by limb for my rescue of Sakatadasa. I won't be able to escape from his clutches unless I am under your personal protection. I pray that I may be allowed to spend the rest of my days here serving you." "You are welcome," said Rakshasa. "Indeed, I want such men. But, don't despair. We shall soon march on Pataliputra and get rid of Chandragupta and Chanakya. Both of you must be tired. Go and take some rest." Siddharthaka and Sakatadasa then went away to take some rest.

Rakshasa continued his conversation with Viradhagupta. Viradhagupta told him that all the subjects of Magadha were talking of a growing estrangement between Chanakya and Chandragupta, due to Chanakya's arrogance and Chandragupta's desire to be free to do as he liked. "Tell me all about it," said Rakshasa overjoyed. "Well," said Viradhagupta, "Chandragupta blames Chanakya for having allowed Malayaketu to escape and thus causing all these

dangers." "In a way he is right," said Rakshasa. "But, how could he have caught and killed Malayaketu also when Vairochaka was still alive with a powerful army?" "Instead of explaining the position, as you would have done, Chanakya simply asked Chandragupta to remember that he owed the throne to him. Chandragupta naturally got wild. Afterwards Chanakya has been daily irritating him with some act of disobedience or other. Chandragupta's proud nature resents this. Both are masterly men, greedy of power. There is no room in the kingdom for both. So, it is only a question of time when Chandragupta dismisses his all-powerful Minister and takes the reins of power in his own hands." "Great news!" said Rakshasa. "Go at once to Pataliputra in this same disguise and tell the Court-Bard Sthanakalasa, who is in our pay from last month unknown to Chanakya, to praise and incite Chandragupta with appropriate stanzas whenever he has a quarrel with Chanakya. Let him send word to me from time to time through Karabhaka." Viradhagupta received a liberal reward, and left for Pataliputra on this mission.

Rakshasa's man then told him that Sakatadasa had sent three precious jewels for his scrutiny and orders as to whether they should be bought from some merchants who were offering them for sale. They were really Parvateswara's jewels sent by Viswavasu and his brothers through these merchant-spies of Chanakya, for sale to Rakshasa. Rakshasa did not know whose they were. On examination he found them to be expensive jewels of exquisite workmanship. He resolved to buy them. So, he asked the man to go and ask Sakatadasa to buy them if they could be got for a reasonable price. Sakatadasa, without the least suspicion, bought them for quite a reasonable price. After asking the man to tell Sakatadasa to buy them, Rakshasa went to have his bath and meal, feeling himself jubilant at the thought of the fast approaching breach between Chanakya and Chandragupta.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE QUARREL

IT was the *Kaumudi* (Autumn full-moon) festival day at Pataliputra when every year the great city would be one whirlpool of gaiety, with singing and dancing parties, buffoon-shows and dramatic and juggling entertainments, with all men, women and children streaming along the streets with peals of hearty laughter and merry-making. It was the time when citizens forgot their worries and abandoned themselves whole-heartedly to amusement. This year the Emperor Chandragupta had ordered that the festival should be celebrated with the greatest pomp imaginable, being the first one after his accession to the throne. He had the 'Suganga' Palace magnificently decorated with buntings and festoons, yak-tails and peacock-feathers. Then, when the full-moon had risen and the city was covered with magic light he wanted to get on to the terrace of the Palace, to watch the fun going on in the town.

The lord Chamberlian, Vaihinari, was embarrassed. How was he to tell the King that Chanakya had prohibited the celebration of the festival in defiance of the King's orders? It was better, he decided, to broach the news

gently after the King had seen the thing for himself. So, he led the way to the terrace.

The King went to the beautiful and lofty terrace and gazed out into the city. There was not a sign of merriment or gaiety. He was very much put out. "Vaihinari," he said in a rage: "Has not the *Kaumudi* festival been ordered to be celebrated with special pomp this year? Have not the citizens been told about our desire that this year's festival should be particularly grand?" "Yes, Sire," said the trembling Vaihinari, "but Chanakya has prohibited the citizens from celebrating it." "What!" roared Chandragupta. "How dare he do that? Bring him at once to me."

The Chamberlain approached Chanakya's humble abode, cursing his mission. He saw the cowdung cakes put up to dry, the sacred grass, and the tottering walls, and said to himself: "No wonder this man can perform miracles, and defy imperious monarchs like Sukalpa and Chandragupta. He has no axe of his own to grind, not even a golden axe. He can afford to do the proper thing, and to speak the truth always without fear or favour, because he wants nothing for himself. It is the belly which makes our tongue lie in the presence of Kings and pretend that the prohibition of this silly festival, when the city is threatened with a great invasion, is wrong. Control the belly, and the tongue can speak the truth. But, alas, that is not for men like me. It is only given to the great ones of the earth like Chanakya to do so." He saw Chanakya sitting in a fury. Saluting him humbly, he said to him that the King wanted to see him urgently. "The King wants to see me urgently at this time of night! I hope the news of my prohibition of the festival has not reached him?" asked Chanakya. "It has, Sir," said

Vaihinari. "Who told him?" asked Chanakya angrily. "Sir," replied Vaihinari, "His Majesty himself went up the terrace just now and saw that the festival was not being celebrated." "And you and his other servants secretly exasperated him, eh? I know you Palace servants. Where is His Majesty?" "He is still on the terrace of 'Suganga' Palace." "All right, let us go there." Then Chanakya and Vaihinari went to 'Suganga' Palace.

Chanakya approached Chandragupta and asked, "Why have you sent for me at this time of night so urgently?"

"I want to know what object you had in prohibiting the *Kaumudi* festival directed to be celebrated by me." "I have an object. I take the full responsibility for the act," said Chanakya. "I have a right to be told about the reason," said Chandragupta. "No," said Chanakya. "There are three kinds of kingdoms, those solely dependent on the King, those dependent on him and on his ministers, and those solely dependent on his ministers. Our kingdom is of the last variety. So, I, the Prime Minister, am all in all and am not bound to tell you the reason for anything." Chandragupta turned his face away in anger.

The bard Sthanakalasa, who was in attendance, then sang :—

The glorious moon shines bright,
And ev'rywheré there's light,
Great Chandra rules in might,
And rebels flee from sight.

Lord of Magadha Great,
Man of Destiny and Fate,
Lion of Power and State,
Foe of traitors at the gate!

Kings are tigers among men,
Kings are lions in their den,
Kings kill quickly all their foes
Kings end quickly all their woes.

Chanakya listened wonderingly, and at once detected the hand of Rakshasa in it and smiled to himself, and made a secret sign. Chandragupta ordered Vaihinari to give a hundred-thousand gold coins to the bard. Chanakya stopped Vaihinari and asked Chandragupta, "Why such an extravagant reward for such a silly thing?" "I won't be frustrated at every turn. A kingship hedged in like this is but one in bondage," said Chandragupta. "Well, if you want to be free, run your kingdom yourself. I can't be held responsible for the government of your country, unless every act of yours has my approval," said Chanakya. "I am going to run the kingdom myself hereafter," said Chandragupta. "All right. I too shall then attend to my own neglected duties," said Chanakya. "Do; tell me now why you prohibited the *Kaumudi* festival," said the King "Tell me why you are so particular in having it celebrated," said Chanakya. "The first and primary reason is that I want my orders to be obeyed," said Chandragupta. "My first object in prohibiting it is to disobey your order in this trifling matter, so that you may not get too autocratic by having all your orders obeyed unquestioningly throughout India. A king should now and then have his orders disobeyed, in order to have some check on his autocratic tendency. Secondly, this is not a time for festivity. The enemy are about to march against the city with a mighty army. Several of our important Officers who helped us against the Nandas, namely Bhagurayana, the younger brother of General Simhabala, Bhadrabhata, the head of the elephants, Purushadatta, the head of the cavalry, Dingarata,

the nephew of Chandrabhanu the Transport Chief, Balagupta, Your Majesty's kinsman, Rajasena, Your Majesty's attendant from boyhood, Lohitaksha, the son of the King of Malwa, and Vijayavarman, the head of the Madraka regiment, have deserted to the enemy with valuable information about our troops and fortifications," replied Chanakya.

"Why did they desert us?" asked the King. "Bhadrabhata and Purushadatta were addicted to wine and women, and neglected the elephants and cavalry. So I suspended them, and placed them on a subsistence allowance. They therefore deserted to Malayaketu, and became the leaders of his elephantry and cavalry. Dingarata and Balagupta wanted higher salaries. Being refused, they took service under Malayaketu, who has promised to pay them far more. Rajasena was given by you extravagant gifts of gold, jewels, horses and elephants. Fearing that I would cancel the gifts, he too went over to Malayaketu. Bhagurayana has always been a traitor to us, though I knew about it only recently. He informed Malayaketu secretly that I had got Parvataka murdered, and advised him to flee with his life. Seeing Sakatadasa and Chandanadasa dealt with by me recently for treason, he took fright and ran away to Malayaketu who, out of gratitude to him for saving his life, has made him confidential Minister and Private Secretary. Lohitaksha and Vijayavarman were feeling aggrieved that others, who rendered less service than they, received more gifts from you, and so they too deserted," replied Chanakya.

"If you knew about the causes of their discontent, why didn't you remedy them earlier?" asked Chandragupta. "It was not possible to remedy them," said Chanakya. "There are only two ways of dealing with discontented subjects, rewards or punishments. It was impossible to

think of reinstating such careless fellows like Bhadrabhata and Purushadatta. The fears of Rajasena and Bhagurayana about losing what they had, did not admit of a remedy. Nor could the envious self-pitying of Vijayavarman and Lohitaksha be cured. Not all our treasury would have satisfied Dingarata and Balagupta. To punish these prominent supporters of ours against the Nandas, would have been both ungrateful and dangerous when Rakshasa and his hosts had yet to be met and defeated, and we could not afford to create any more foes. On hearing that these powerful Generals and Officers had deserted to Rakshasa, I resolved that this was a critical time when we had much rather concentrate on putting the fort in order and preparing our people for war, than celebrating a frivolous festival."

"May I ask you some more questions?" asked Chandragupta. "Do," said Chanakya. "Why did you allow Malayaketu to escape? If you had not done so, this danger would never have threatened us." "What else could we do? We had only two courses open to us, to give Malayaketu half the kingdom promised to his father Parvataka, or to punish him. To punish him would have meant a public confession that we were ungrateful wretches, who had partaken in the murder of Parvataka. To give him half the kingdom would have made the murder of Parvataka a senseless crime. So I allowed Malayaketu to escape."

"A fine explanation! Why did you not take proper steps against Rakshasa when he was here? Why was he allowed to leave peacefully?" "He was a man endowed with intelligence, integrity and valour in a high degree. He was universally respected and loved in the city. His

only fault was an unfaltering devotion to his master. To have allowed him to go on living here would have meant the risk ot having a serious revolt. To fight him would have meant very heavy loss of men, and also the death of this fine man whom I hoped to win over one day to your service. I wanted to trap him into a false step by allowing him to quit the city in peace. He fell into the trap and quitted the town, and thereby lost his only chance of a successful fight with us. Even people who would have fought for him, had he remained here, gave up supporting him as they considered him a coward."

"Oh, what a great man is Rakshasa!" exclaimed Chandragupta. "Why do you say so?" asked Chanakya in wrath. "Because he lived here, in this city, like a king in the midst of our troops, and even obstructed our proclamation of victory. None dared to arrest him. He left just when he pleased," said the King. "Oh, is that all? I thought he had made Malayaketu Emperor of Jambudvipa[1], as I have made you Emperor," said Chanakya sarcastically. "You didn't make me Emperor of Jambudvipa!" said Chandragupta scorningly. "Then who did?" asked Chanakya, angrily. "Fate," replied Chandragupta. "Only fools believe in fate," said Chanakya. "Only fools boast," said Chandragupta. Chanakya's eyes flashed fire as he stamped his feet on the ground and exclaimed: "Oh, I feel inclined to take a vow to uproot your line as I did the line of the Nandas. But, I have no right to complain. I ought to have known better. Here is my Sword of State. Give it to Rakshasa, or any other person you like, and make him your Prime Minister." He threw down his sword, exclaiming, "Rakshasa, thou hast conquered." He then left the place.

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1. India and the outlying countries.

Chandragupta said to Vaihinari: "Proclaim to all my subjects that henceforward Chandragupta himself will rule the Empire without the aid of Chanakya." The Chamberlain stood for a moment dazed at the turn events had taken. "What are you thinking about?" asked Chandragupta. "Oh, nothing. I am glad that Your Majesty has at last become a King in reality," replied Vaihinari. "Sonottara, I have got a headache as a result of this quarrel. Let me go and have some rest now," said Chandragupta. Then Sonottara led him to his bed-chamber.

CHAPTER XXVIII

CHANAKYA'S MASTER-STROKE

THE preparations in Malayaketu's camp were almost complete for the invasion of Magadha. The troops were only waiting for marching orders, and were getting more and more impatient every day. Rakshasa was waiting for news from Pataliputra about the expected breach between Chandragupta and Chanakya. He was busy, day and night, planning out the details of the invasion. This particular morning he was suffering from a terrific headache.

Malayaketu was as impatient as the most impatient trooper in his army. He thought that his hosts could easily smash up a dozen Chandraguptas and Chanakyas put together, and so could not see any point in waiting for the news of the breach between the Emperor and his Prime Minister before advancing on Pataliputra. In his indignation at his father's murder and the consequent widowhood of his mother and step-mothers, he had vowed to kill Chandragupta and Chanakya, and make their wives widows before performing his father's funeral ceremonies. Nearly ten months had passed since that proud boast. Nothing had happened. His father had not yet got even a libation of water. His mother's reproachful looks were hard to bear or to answer.

Malayaketu's nature was very weak and simple. So the cunning Bhagurayana had no difficulty at all in gently dropping hints against Rakshasa's loyalty to the cause and rousing the Prince's suspicions. He told him one day casually, "After all is said and done, a hereditary minister will be attached to his hereditary masters. So, one can't blame Rakshasa if he feels a desire to make up with Chandragupta, who is a scion of the Nandas, and to regain his former place of Prime Minister of the Magadhan Empire. But, personally, I believe that this is a baseless imputation against Rakshasa." "But, how did it come to be made at all, if it is entirely baseless? Besides, now that you say this, I recollect the remarks made by Bhadrabhata, Purushadatta, Dingarata, Rajasena, Lohitaksha, Balagupta and Vijayavarman when they entered my service. They emphasised that having been the victims of Chanakya's injustice, they were not entering my service as Rakshasa's followers, but directly as my admirers. What did they mean by that?" asked Malayaketu. "They evidently adverted to the possibility of a reconciliation between Chandragupta and Rakshasa, and did not therefore want to be considered as Rakshasa's followers." "You are right," said Malayaketu. "But I see no reason yet to suspect Rakshasa of any desire to desert me and join Chandragupta." "Not the slightest," said Bhagurayana. "I hear that the poor man is suffering from a thundering headache since this morning. Let us go and visit him, and cheer him up," said Malayaketu.

Malayaketu and Bhagurayana started for Rakshasa's tent. Sindhusena, Meghanada, Pushkaraksha, Simhanada and Chitravarman joined them, and said that they too were very anxious to see and cheer up Rakshasa. When they reached Rakshasa's tent, Malayaketu dismissed every-

body except Bhagurayana, stating that he wanted to see Rakshasa unexpectedly and alone.

Just a few minutes before, Karabhaka had arrived and was closeted with Rakshasa retailing to him the news of the quarrel and the dismissal of Chanakya. Malayaketu suggested to Bhagurayana that they would secretly overhear the conversation in order to know the real state of affairs. So they listened: Rakshasa asked Karabhaka, "Where is Chanakya after his dismissal?" "At Pataliputra," was the reply. "Are you sure that he will not be recalled and reinstated?" "Absolutely certain." "Is it only this prohibition of the *Kaumudi* festival that is the cause of the dismissal?" "Oh, no. That was but the last provocation. Chandragupta was furious at Chanakya's allowing His Highness Malayaketu to escape. He was praising you to the skies, and was stating that he considered you far abler. Chanakya then threw down his sword, and asked Chandragupta to appoint you, or any other person, as Prime Minister," said Karabhaka. "Bhagurayana," said Malayaketu, "So, perhaps, Chanakya was not the person who sent the poison-maid to kill my father, as we heard then, and Chandragupta seems to be very anxious to appoint Rakshasa as his Prime Minister." "Your Highness had better consider all these things at leisure after the capture of Pataliputra," said Bhagurayana. "This is not the time to break with Rakshasa, unless he does something now against us. Politicians ought to be judged only by their present actions."

Karabhaka took his departure by the back door. Then, Malayaketu knocked at Rakshasa's door and announced himself informally. He asked him, "When are we to march on Pataliputra?" "At once," said Rakshasa. "There is nothing more to wait for. Chanakya has been dismissed,

and our principal obstacle is removed." "I don't see why Chanakya's dismissal or retention should loom so large with us. Still, I am glad that we are marching at last," said Malayaketu.

Soon, the immense hosts of Malayaketu were on the move. The elephants, cavalry, chariots and infantry made a very brave show. They started on the day named by Jeevasiddhi as auspicious, namely, the Full-Moon day in the month of *Margasirsha*, after the Moon had risen. Rakshasa had doubted the propriety of starting on a Full-Moon day, a day generally forbidden for marches. But, his implicit faith in Jeevasiddhi had finally triumphed over those scruples.

Rakshasa was also feeling some vague misgivings about the loyalty of the former adherents of Chandragupta and Chanakya, who had flocked to his side. He allayed the misgivings by attributing them to his own suspicious nature. He had arranged the divisions of the army thus: The Khasias and Magadhas were in the vanguard under him. The Gandharas and Yuvanas were in charge of the centre. The Sakas, Kiratas, Hutas and Kambhojas were behind them. Pushkaraksha, Meghanada, Simhanada, Sindhusena and Chitravarman with their regiments were round Malayaketu.

The army began its march. The place where the *Jumna* was to be crossed was not defended, but the fort at Indraprastha was defended. There was a discussion as to whether they should take the city, or march on. "Let us march on," said Bhagurayana. "The enemy have not had the courage to meet us. Evidently, Chandragupta dare not leave Pataliputra, leaving Chanakya there. Let us not waste our time over these forts now, but strike at Pataliputra. If the trunk falls, the branches will fall off by themselves. Besides, time is of great importance

to us. Chandragupta must be caught at this time, when he has no Prime Minister, and when his quarrel with Chanakya is recent. If we delay, Chandragupta and Chanakya may make up their quarrel at this common danger, and then our task will become more difficult." Rakshasa too saw the wisdom of this plan.

So the army marched on to Pataliputra, leaving Indraprastha, Hastinapura, Kanyakubja, Radhapura, Prayag and Benares un-captured. When they were near Pataliputra, Bhagurayana said to Malayaketu, "Now that Pataliputra is near, and Chandragupta may try to do mischief through his spies, we had better prohibit all egress and ingress from and into our camp except by Passports." "Do," said Malayaketu, "and issue the Passes yourself. I can't trust any other, no, not even Rakshasa. I wish my suspicions against him are unfounded. But, they keep on recurring.

A few minutes later Jeevasiddhi went to Bhagurayana to get a Passport for leaving the camp. Malayaketu was sitting in the next room. Bhagurayana asked Jeevasiddhi, "I suppose you are going into Pataliputra on some errand of Rakshasa." "Oh, no. I have finished with Rakshasa. For a long time I have been tormented by my conscience for still associating with such a man as Rakshasa." "Why, what did he do?" "That I cannot tell you." "Then I won't give you the Passport." "Oh, well, keep what I tell you a secret. He got the great Parvateswara murdered by means of the mysterious poison-maid." "What!" said Bhagurayana, "All of us heard that it was the wretch Chanakya who did it in order to avoid giving half the kingdom as promised." "That was false. Chanakya did not know even the name of the woman. Indeed, he drove me out of Pataliputra in disgrace for aiding

Rakshasa. Rakshasa it was who engaged the wretch in order to do away with Parvateswara, who was so much more formidable than Chanakya or Chandragupta," said Jeevasiddhi. "Here is your Pass. Tell this to the Prince," said Bhagurayana. Malayaketu went to the spot and said, "I have heard it all. Oh, the hypocritical wretch! Oh, the murderous villain!" Jeevasiddhi took his Passport and went away.

Malayaketu's first inclination was to call and question Rakshasa, and sentence him to death if Jeevasiddhi's allegation was true. But Bhagurayana told him, "In politics, we are not to act as our heart dictates, but are to bide the proper time even for the most appropriate act. Rakshasa was confident of esily tackling Chandragupta and Chanakya, but the great Parvateswara was far too great to be tackled fairly. So, he took to this mean and underhand method of killing him, and laid the blame on the wretch Chanakya and got off with it. This is however not the time to punish Rakshasa for it. We are in sight of Pataliputra where he has much influence. Let us capture the city, and then deal with him."

Just at that moment Siddharthaka, who had taken his sealed deposit from Sakatadasa and had tried to leave the camp without a Pass, was arrested by Captain Dirgharakha and was sent up to Bhagurayana. On his person being searched, a letter and a parcel sealed with Rakshasa's private seal were recovered. Malayaketu had the letter opened without breaking the seal. It read, "With best compliments to your Exalted Self. The veracious one had kept his word and dismissed our adversary. Now it remains to give our friends the things stipulated by them for rendering their invaluable help. They have undertaken, in return, to seize and destroy their present master and come over to your

Exalted Self. Of these allies, some desire the treasure and elephants of the enemy, and some his territory. I have received, with immense gratitude, the three priceless ornaments sent by your Exalted Self. I am also sending something in return along with this letter and pray that it should be accepted. The trustworthy person who brings this letter will deliver a most important oral message, which should be heard and carried out by the Exalted One." "Ah," said Malayaketu, "and what is in that parcel? Open and see, but keep the seal intact." The parcel was opened, and was found to contain the three ornaments presented by himself to Rakshasa through Jajali. "Now it is clear that this traitorous letter is written by Rakshasa to Chandragupta. Beat this fellow till he confesses, and find out from him what the oral message is," said Malayaketu.

Siddharthaka was taken out by a soldier, Bhasuraka, and tortured. He then fell at Malayaketu's feet, and besought his pardon and protection if he confessed the whole truth. Malayaketu promised. Then Siddharthaka said, "It was my master Rakshasa who had the letter written to Chandragupta through Sakatadasa, and gave me the sealed parcel for delivery along with the letter. The oral message which I had to memorise, ran thus: 'Here are my dear friends, five Princes who are very friendly to you, namely, Chitravarman, King of the Kuluta country; Simhanada of Malaya, Pushkaraksha of Kashmir, Sindhusena of Sind, and Meghanada, the Persian Ruler of Cutch and Saurashtra. Out of these, the first three covet the dominion of Malayaketu, and the last two his elephants and treasury. I pray that the Exalted One should grant them these boons, just as I have been granted the boon of the dismissal of Chanakya.'" "Ah!" cried Malayaketu, "Now it is clear why these five Princes were so anxious to come with us to see Rakshasa and inquire about his headache,

and why they have been posted near my person. Call the traitor Rakshasa."

Vijaya, the female aide-de-camp, went to Rakshasa and told him that Malayaketu wanted to see him urgently. Rakshasa, in order to please Malayaketu by having some adornment on his person, took from Sakatadasa one of the costly jewels bought from the concealed agents of Viswavasu, wore it and went to see Malayaketu.

Malayaketu told him of the contents of the letter, seized from Sidharthaka and the oral message, and asked him to explain his treason if he could. "The letter is a forgery," said Rakshasa. "I never wrote it to Chandragupta. Siddharthaka, what is this?" he asked. "Minister, unable to bear the beating, I said so," said Siddharthaka. "What will not man say under torture?" asked Rakshasa. "Why should Sakatadasa write such a letter?" asked Malayaketu. "Sakatadasa is the soul of honesty so far as I am concerned. If he wrote it, it is as good as written by me," said Rakshasa. "Call Sakatadasa," said Malayaketu, "and ask him to bring the seal also." "It is no use calling Sakatadasa, the bosom friend of Rakshasa," said Bhagurayana. "Let some other admitted writing of Sakatadasa's be brought." This was in order to prevent Sakatadasa's revealing the circumstances under which he wrote the letter. Malayaketu agreed. The admitted writing of Sakatadasa was brought, and compared. It tallied exactly with the writing in the disputed letter. Malayaketu then showed both of them to Rakshasa, who had to admit their identity. Suddenly something gave way in Rakshasa. He saw Chanakya's hand in it all, but could not explain it. Sakatadasa too had evidently succumbed to Chanakya's temptations, he concluded. "Perhaps he wanted to join his wife and child at Pataliputra and live peacefully there, and so has bought his peace with

Chanakya at this price," he thought. "It is better to bow to Fate and acknowledge defeat, and face death. Death will be welcome after the extirpation of the Nandas and the complete triumph of Chanakya." So he stood silent, hanging his head down.

"Why did you send the jewels I gave you to Chandragupta?" asked Malayaketu. "I gave them as a present to Siddharthaka for saving Sakatadasa. I did not send them to Chandragupta," said Rakshasa. "Is it believable that such costly presents sent by a Prince from his own person will be given away to a fellow who saves a petition-writer from being impaled?" asked Bhagurayana. "And is this jewel you are wearing now, one of the three sent to you by Chandragupta?" asked Malayaketu. Then he looked at it closely and exclaimed, "My god! It is one of the jewels of my father, the great Parvateswara. Vijaya, come and see this." Vijaya also examined it and said, "It is certainly one of the jewels worn by our King Parvateswara of blessed memory on the evil night when the poison-maid went in to him." Rakshasa stood petrified with wonder and dismay. He realised then that the bogus merchants who sold the three jewels to him must have been Chanakya's agents. He felt himself utterly foiled, and resigned himself to his fate.

"Tell me," said Malayaketu, "If Chandragupta did not send this jewel to you, how did you get it?" "Sakatadasa bought three jewels from some merchants at my instance. We never realised that they were Parvateswara's," said Rakshasa. "Three jewels! Merchants! Sakatadasa buying! Oh, Rakshasa, Rakshasa, you are already a demon in your acts. Don't utter lies also to add to your infamy. Chandragupta, the Emperor of Jambudvipa, the master of a thousand millions, to offer these jewels for sale!"

Rakshasa too saw the absurdity of such a story, and so kept quiet.

Malayaketu at once directed Sekharasena to seize Pushkaraksha, Simhanada and Chitravarman and bury them alive for coveting his territories, and to seize Meghanada and Sindhusena and have them trampled to death by elephants for coveting his elephants and treasure. Sekharasena seized the five unsuspecting Kings suddenly, and carried out the cruel orders to the very letter, and reported the fact to Malayaketu.

Then Malayaketu sent Rakshasa away contemptuously from his camp, saying: "Go and join your Chandragupta, and get the ministership for which you sold your honour and tried to sell me. I can tackle a dozen Chandraguptas and Rakshasas and Chanakyas combined."

Rakshasa entered Pataliputra dispirited, humiliated and broken, and, as he supposed, unnoticed, but really followed by Chanakya's spy Udumbara (who got the fact reported to Chanakya. Chanakya at once staged Chandanadasa's execution, and deputed Visalaksha to entrap Rakshasa.

As soon as Rakshasa left, the allied Yavanas, Khasias and others deserted Malayaketu on learning about the sudden executions of the five Kings and the dismissal of Rakshasa who had been the soul of the army till then. Before Malayaketu had recovered from this second sensation, Bhadrabhata, Purushadatta, Dingarata, Rajasena, Balagupta, Bhagurayana, Lohitaksha and Vijayavarman seized him, and bound him hand and foot for being produced before Chandragupta. Then Chandragupta and Chanakya advanced at the head of the Mauryan army, and routed the leaderless army of Malayaketu.

Meanwhile, Rakshasa learnt from Visalaksha, who was disguised as a sight-seer, that Chandanadasa had been

taken to the hanging place for being impaled for refusing to surrender Rakshasa's wife. Resolved to save him he rushed to the spot. At first he intended to go armed with a sword, and to rescue Chandanadasa by force. But he heard the shouts of victory following Malayaketu's capture and the rout of his army. He was also told by Visalaksha that after Sakatadasa's forcible rescue, the hangmen had been tortured to death for their negligence and cowardice, and that thereafter all hangmen had, on the mere approach of any armed person, made it a rule to kill the condemned man forthwith and thus escape death by torture for themselves. So, Rakshasa went unarmed to the place of execution.

He saw Chandanadasa bid a tearful farewell to his wife and son, and the hangmen Bilwapatra and Vajraloman exultingly lay hands on him for impaling him on the pole which had been newly burnished up and sharpened, and glistened in the twilight.

Rakshasa at onee declared his identity, and offered himself as a victim instead of his unfortunate friend. The hangmen, who were really Siddharthàka and Samiddharthaka in disguise, sent word to Chanakya, who rushed to the spot along with Chandragupta attended by his Generals. Rakshasa was told that the only condition on which Chandanadasa could live was by his accepting the Prime Ministership of Chandragupta and discharging the duties of that office loyally and faithfully thereafter. Seeing himself thoroughly beaten, anxious to save Chandanadasa, and inwardly feeling the magnanimity and greatness of Chanakya and Chandragupta, he agreed to the condition and accepted the Sword of Office, and swore allegiance to Chandragupta without any mental reservation.

Chandragupta asked him to deal with Malayaketu as he chose. "Grant him his life," said Rakshasa. "He is

given his kingdom also to be ruled under us," said Chandragupta. "So too, the descendants of the five executed Kings will be given their kingdoms to be ruled under us. Chandanadasa is made the Chief Seth among the Seths of the Empire, and the Lord Mayor of Pataliputra. Sakatadasa too is set free, and is appointed Superintendent of Writs."

"Oh, this is divine generosity," said Rakshasa. "But it will not be wasted generosity," said Malayaketu, who had by now been told the whole story of his being duped by Chanakya and his spies. "Never more will I dream of opposing Chandragupta. His enemies are mine hereafter." "What will the venerable Chanakya do now? I hope he will bless us still with his unselfish and unparalleled advice," said Rakshasa. "That he will, as long as he lives, and as long as *Vrishala* and his descendants live," said Chandragupta. Chanakya exclaimed, "Long live the Emperor Chandragupta, the beloved of the Gods!"

The entire assemblage, including Malayaketu, Rakshasa and the prisoners of war, took up the cry which shook the earth. "All the prisoners of war are set free," said Chandragupta, "as they are now my subjects." "The next Full-Moon day the *Kaumudi* festival will be celebrated with three-fold pomp," said Chanakya amidst cheers.

CHAPTER XXIX

CONQUESTS EVERYWHERE

"WITH Rakshasa firmly won over to our side, and all the old supporters of the Nandas either dead or converted, now is the time to launch the great scheme of conquest of all India, which has been my dream ever since you were crowned as Emperor," said Chanakya to Chandragupta. "The entire army has been reorganised and strengthened and manned by young, efficient and loyal Officers. Vaisyas and Sudras have been freely enrolled as Officers and men, thus vastly increasing our strength. The army now comprises 6,00,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry, 6,000 chariots and 9,000 elephants, and is the most efficient war machine in India. The training given to it is the best ever given to an army. It has been taught to fight in staff formation, in snake formation, in hollow circles and in separate detachments of guerillas. Their discipline too is perfect, being natural, and not artificial. There are large bodies of hereditary troops among them, and few wild tribes eager for plunder and apt to become easily discontented and panic-stricken and to behave like lurking snakes. We can easily over-run the whole of Jambudvipa with this splendid army. Of course, we shall be just conquerors, and not

greedy conquerors or demon-like conquerors. You shall conquer the whole country like another Bharata, and not like another Alexander." "I like this task better than the tortuous diplomacy and intrigue we have used so far," replied Chandragupta.

The matter was fully discussed at a plenary meeting of all the Ministers and Generals. It was unanimously resolved that a huge army should immediately set out under Chandragupta and Chanakya for effecting the conquest and subjugation of all India with the exception of the Chola, Pandya, Keralaputra, Satyaputra and Simhala kingdoms in the far south. Chanakya had a special affection for these southern kingdoms. He said, "They are all well-governed, and I shall make their Kings do whatever the Emperor wants, without the need for a war and consequent devastation of those territories. After all, they were never subject to Magadha. Nor are they likely to dispute our hegemony in India." Kalinga too was excepted, as its King had rendered yeoman service to Chandragupta at the time of his exile and during the fight with the Nandas, and had been promised virtual independence in his home-territories and exemption from tribute till 261 B. C.

The mighty army first advanced in triumph westwards up to the limits of the Empire. They were welcomed with joy everywhere. At Prayag, Benares, Radhapura and Kausambi the crowds were enormous, and cheered their King and Prime Minister vociferously. At Kausambi the marriage of Chandragupta with Princess Durdhara was definitely settled. Chandragupta and Chanakya had been greatly worried by the fact that Santavati had borne no children, though five years had passed since her marriage. It was of the greatest importance that the Emperor should have a son to succeed him. Santavati seemed unlikely to have a child. She had also urged Chandragupta to take

another queen after the astrologer had predicted that she would have no child. She was of an unselfish nature. She told Chandragupta, when he looked miserable at her suggestion, "My lord, you are a King, and domestic considerations ought to be subordinated to considerations of state. Besides, I love you too much to deny you the joy of having a son and heir. And, why, he will be my son and heir too. I would love to have a child to fondle. So, do not hesitate. Many virtuous kings have done so before." Chanakya, on being informed of this, had, after a great deal of search, finally selected Durdhara, a descendant of King Udayana and of the bluest Kshatriya blood in India, and reputed to be the most beautiful Princess of her time. The King of Vatsa, her father, was overjoyed on hearing the news and had readily given his consent, mentioning politely that it was in the fitness of things that a Princess descended from Udayana of Vatsa and Padmavati of Magadha should be married to a descendant of Bimbisara and Darsaka. Chandragupta now met the Princess. One look convinced him that popular rumour had in no way exaggerated her charms. He and Chanakya promised to return to Kausambi and celebrate the marriage as soon as the main part of the campaign was over.

The march then continued. There were rousing welcomes at Hastinapura and Indraprastha. Then the grand army crossed the *Jumna* and went on to the Hyphasis.[1] All the Kings between the *Jumna* and the *Hydaspes* met Chandragupta at Alexandergiri on the Hyphasis headed by Malayaketu, Bhagela and Saubhuti, and tendered their submission. Saubhuti presented Chandragupta with two suits of gold armour inset with gems, and also with twenty-four of his famous hunting dogs. Chanakya

1. *Vipasa* or Beas.

re-named Alexandergiri "*Rajagiri*" adding, "The evil days of the Yavana conquest are gone. Let nothing in our country remind us of Alexander or his cruel massacres and devastations. We shall bury this bronze column with its inscription 'Here Alexander halted.' But the altars shall remain with the gods changed to Amman, Siva, Saraswati, Brahmâ, Kaveri, Surya, and Narayana, All towns named 'Alexandria' shall be re-named. It is further my wish that no writer in any language in our country should mention anything about Alexander or his invasion. I am issuing orders throughout the Empire to see that people contravening this are suitably dealt with."

The army then moved on to Saubhuti's Capital, and were entertained for two days with great magnificence. Then they went on to Sangala which had been re-built. A hundred-thousand Kathaians had assembled to welcome the Emperor, who was already their King. Chandragupta had gifted a million *Panas* towards this re-building. Women and children crowded round to see him at close quarters. Chanakya ordered a free feeding of all the poor and a treat for the children in honour of the Emperor's visit. He told the Kathaians, "Your city has once more risen from its ruins. See that you do not lose it again."

Malayaketu entertained Chandragupta at his new Capital which was named "Vitastanagari." Swarnamayi had died two months before. So, Chandragupta and Chanakya were saved from the embarrassment of meeting her, who had done so much for them and whose husband and brother-in-law had met with their death indirectly through them. Chandragupta showed Chanakya the dungeon where he had been imprisoned. On seeing it, Chanakya exclaimed "Thank God, you had the Empress Santavati to save you. I could never have rescued you from here within a day's

time, and he should have killed you that day if you had been where they had imprisoned you."

Now the army got ready to cross the Hydaspes and invade Takshasila. Omphis sent messengers promising to submit to Chandragupta, and begged of Chanakya to intercede for him. Chanakya was for accepting the offer, provided Omphis would surrender the key-town ot Takshasila and be content to hold the rest of the country under Chandragupta. Omphis was unwilling to agree to this and resolved to fight the Mauryan army, relying on the aid of Eudemos and the Greek garrisons. The Greeks of Nikaia and Boukephala too, on being expelled by Malayaketu, had joined him. The Greeks and Omphis put Takshasila into a fit condition to withstand a prolonged siege. "They are weak at taking towns," said Eudemos to Omphis. "So we shall be perfectly safe here for years to come, and can take the offensive whenever we like."

Chandragupta found that it would take at least two years to capture Takshasila which had a garrison of 60,000 first rate troops, impregnable walls, and provisions enough to last for six years, besides enormous riches. He said to Chanakya, "Our siege-trains are poor. This city is too strong to be stormed. It has only to be starved into surrender. We should concentrate our attention in future on improving our siege-equipment. Meanwhile, we shall leave a big army here to blockade the town, and proceed with the remaining troops to finish our work." Chanakya agreed. One-hundred-thousand men and a thousand elephants were left behind under Balagupta to blockade Takshasila. Chandragupta and Chanakya marched with the rest of the army to Kashmir. The Kings of Kashmir and Abhisara and Arsakes tendered their submission, and were made feudatories of the Empire.

The Emperor, and the Prime Minister were greatly impressed with the beauty of the Kashmir valley and its inhabitants. They had entered Kashmir through the Baramula Pass. They went to Pahalgam, the village in the hills, and thence they went with a few select men to Amarnath on horseback. The path lay by steep snow-capped hills, and the horses had to go by narrow footpaths overlooking abysses 600 to 800 feet deep. On the way there was the delightful *Seshnag* river, which would be ice-bound during winter. Chanakya named this spot "Chandravati,"[2] after the Emperor. Then they pushed on to Amarnath, where Chandragupta and Chanakya worshipped Siva in the famous cave.

The Emperor was moved deeply by the holy atmosphere of the place, the snow-capped hills and the perfect peace broken only by the hymns of the Sanyasis, whose living faith had made them brave the dangers and hardships of a journey thither. "Why go on fighting? Why climb up the climbing wave? Why not live on here, not caring for wealth or kingdom?" asked he of Chanakya. "That cannot be," replied Chanakya. "A king must do his duty. Rest and prayer are not for him. Readiness for action is his *Dharma*, and never-ceasing activity his ***Karma.*** What peace can there be for him when his subjects are being conquered and massacred by foreigners, or plundered by wild tribes and robbers, or plunged into a state of anarchy like that in the depths of the sea where fish eats fish, the strong ever preying on the weak? This very snow will then burn him like fire, this peace will be for him the peace of the prison or the graveyard." Chandragupta was convinced of the soundness of this argument.

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2. Now Chandanwadi.

A Governor was appointed for Kashmir with a strong army to aid him. Then, Chandragupta and Chanakya returned to the Punjab through the Banihal Pass, which Chanakya named "The Kashmir Gate." The army marched on to Simhapura where it had a glorious reception, the whole town going out with Vijayasimha to receive their own Prince. After a week's stay at Simhapura the army went down the *Indus* valley up to Patala. The Sibis, Malavas, Kshudrakas and the Princes and peoples of the *Indus* valley and delta submitted at once, and were added on to the Uttarapatha province. The forts at Multan, Malavkot, Brahmasthala and Patala were strengthened, and trustworthy Captains placed in charge of them, with adequate garrisons and provisions.

Then the army went along the banks of the eastern branch of the *Indus*, and marched into Cutch and Saurashtra. Meghanada's son, Arasaka, submitted. He was confirmed in his kingdom of Cutch, on condition that he paid a small tribute and supplied a regiment to Chandragupta's army. At the request of the leaders of the Kshatriya clans of Saurashtra, which had been forcibly subdued by Meghanada, Saurashtra was taken away from Arasaka and given to Raja Vaisya Pushyagupta, a wealthy, powerful and universally respected Chieftain in Kathiawad, whose life's ambition was to remove famine from Saurashtra by constructing a big irrigation lake near Girnar called 'Sudarsana lake,' for ensuring a perennial supply of water for cultivation. Pushyagupta took the gigantic work on hand as soon as he was appointed Governor. "My private fortune of a million *Panas* shall be utilized for this," said he. "You shall receive a million *Panas* from the imperial treasury also," said Chandragupta amidst cheers.

Then, Chandragupta marched on Ujjaini, which also surrendered without a blow. He established a Viceroyalty

at Ujjaini, making Saurashtra, Simhapura, and all the countries between Cutch, the *Sutlej*, *Jumna*, and *Narmada* subject to it. Lohitaksha was made the King of Malwa, on condition of paying a small tribute and supplying a regiment to the Imperial Army. Vedisagari was made a secondary Capital for the Viceroy. Pushyagupta and Lohitaksha requested that Ujjaini be made the second city of the Empire, that the Viceroyalty be filled up as far as possible by the Crown Prince, and that the Emperor reside for some months now and then at Ujjain. Chandragupta promised to consider the requests favourably. He made Bhagurayana the Viceroy of Ujjain.

Envoys poured into Ujjaini from the many kingdoms of South India, with tributes and offers of submission. The Kings of Kuntala and of the Kosas, Kadambas, Gangas, Vadukas and Konkanasthas of the far south, and the Princes of Maharashtra and Errandapalla were among these. Chandragupta accepted their submissions and tributes, and sent Commanders and garrisons to Kundinapura, Nandadera, Nasika, Kuntala and Viziadrug. The great Andhra King, Satyasri Satkarni, went in person to Ujjain, did his homage to Chandragupta, placed his kingdom and troops at his disposal, and was embraced by the Emperor who accepted the terms of his submission. "Our motto is 'Uphold *Dharma*,'" said Satyasri. "It is our proud boast that in our kingdom no man lacks food, and no Brahmin lacks learning." "Very good," said Chandragupta, "So long as you stick to that ideal, the Mauryas will have no quarrel with you. We can work together for that great ideal. Let nobody in Jambudvipa be starved in body, mind or soul! Let us follow the venerable Chanakya's advice, and be happy in the happiness of our subjects." Satyasri went back to his country delighted.

Chandragupta and Chanakya visited the *Mahakali* temple in Ujjain. There the Emperor marvelled at the "Wheel of Time," sculptured prominently on the wall. "Why is it so prominently exhibited ?" asked Chandragupta. "Is it not better to have the 'Wheel of *Dharma* instead ?'" "Oh, no," said Chanakya. "Time includes times of *Dharma* and *Adharma*, and so the 'Wheel of Time' is a more comprehensive object than the 'Wheel of *Dharma*,' as ordinarily conceived."

They went to Bharukachchha or Bhrigukacha, and bathed in the sacred *Suklateertha* in the *Narmada*. Syama Sastri and Meenakshi had both passed away. Chandragupta was highly pleased with the quiet and holy atmosphere at *Suklateertha*, and had a palace constructed in the place, so that he might spend his honeymoon there with Durdhara. "A child conceived here will have peace and prosperity all his life," was the popular belief which Chandragupta also shared. Surat, at the mouth of the *Tapti*, was occupied without a fight. Then, Chandragupta and Chanakya proceeded to Kausambi with their troops, after sending a powerful army of all arms under Simhabala, Purushadatta, Chandrabhanu and Dingarata to conquer the lands to the south.

The marriage of Chandragupta and Durdhara was celebrated at Kausambi in January 318 B. C., with the greatest possible pomp. Heaps of gold were spent on the Brahmins and the poor. Many Kings and Princes from all over India attended the function. The Andhra and Kalinga Kings were prominent among them, and were given the places of honour among the guests. Tanko, the Kirata King of Nepal, Manjupatan and Kartripura, also attended the marriage, and swore allegiance to Chandragupta for his kingdom. Gautami too had gone from Pataliputra to

attend the marriage. She soon made herself popular with Durdhara by her simple and charming manners.

After the marriage festivities were over and the guests had been sent away, Chandragupta and Durdhara, with Chanakya and Gautami went to *Suklateertha*, and lived there quietly for four months till Durdhara felt her heart beat wildly with joy at the prospect of becoming a mother. Chanakya was apprised of the joyous tidings by Gautami, and gave elaborate instructions as to how the expectant mother was to conduct herself. "Let her eat only sweet and agreeable food, let her have plenty of music and song, and let her have daily recitations of the *Ramayana* and *Bhagavata*," said he, among other things.

Chandragupta and Chanakya returned to Pataliputra, with Durdhara and Gautami, to perform in the 'Suganga' Palace itself the necessary religious ceremonies associated with an expectant mother. The entire city went out to meet the King and Queen Durdhara. There was wild rejoicing among all the citizens and subjects at the prospect of an heir. The *Seemanta*[3] ceremony was performed with great solemnity and splendour. In due course Durdhara gave birth to a very healthy and handsome boy, whom Chanakya ordered to be named as Bhadrasara or Bindusara. The whole Empire was delirious with joy. Pataliputra was full of gaiety and rejoicing. Three days' holidays were proclaimed in honour of the birth of the Prince, and thousands of prisoners released. Kings and Princes from all over India sent messengers with letters of congratulations and presents. On the same day as Bindusara's birth, Pushyagupta had a son whom he named Chandragupta, after the Emperor, who agreed to this very gladly.

3. A ceremony performed usually in the sixth month of pregnancy.

The army had meanwhile conquered Maharashtra, Devarashtra, Errandapalla, Konkan, Kuntala and Mahishamandala, and had established suitable forts at Isila, Suvarnagiri and Chandrarayapatna. Chandragupta constituted a Viceroyalty at Suvarnagiri for the southern provinces, with Purushadatta as Viceroy.

When delimiting the frontiers of the southern provinces of Suvarnagiri Viceroyalty near Chandrarayapatna, Simhabala, who had only a small infantry division with him at the time, came across the troops of the King of Mohur, a town in South Arcot. This King and his troops were pursuing some Kosa and Vaduka allies of the Mauryas, after defeating them. Simhabala asked the King peremptorily to desist from the pursuit, and to withdraw to his own territories in the south. The King contemptuously refused, and even referred to the Mauryas as "upstart Mauryas," or "braggart Mauryas" *(Vamban Moriyar)*. This made Simhabala furious. He sent urgent messages to the main army to come up. Soon Purushadatta, Dingarata and Chandrabhanu joined him with two-hundred-thousand infantry, 10,000 cavalry, 2,000 elephants and 1,000 chariots.

The King of Mohur had retreated with his troops as soon as he heard that the main army had been sent for. He had taken refuge behind the Podiyil hills relying on the impossibility of getting the army, and especially the chariots, across that high mountain over which there was no path. But he was mistaken. Chandrabhanu assembled his engineers who soon cut a fine chariot road across the mountain. The golden-wheeled chariots of the Mauryas advanced rapidly along that road with the mighty Mauryan umbrella on an elephant and Mauryan flags flying and drums beating, and with the Kosas and Vadukas advancing in front. The King of Mohur and his troops fled precipitately

southwards. Simhabala halted his troops, and made the Podiyil hills the Mauryan frontier as he had instructions from Chandragupta and Chanakya not to invade the Tamil kingdoms of the South. He reported, "Our frontier is now the Podiyil hills. Shall we march to the southern sea? Presents are pouring in from the King of Mohur and the Tamil Kings, who now acknowledge our supremacy and praise the Mauryas and Arya Chanakya to the skies." In six months more he got a reply from the Emperor, "Stop where you are. No need to advance further south as messengers from the Tamil Kings and Ceylon have come here direct by ship, and sworn allegiance to the Emperor and prayed that our armies should be directed not to press them further." Simhabala perused the letter and said, "That is reasonable. Still I had dreamt of planting the lofty Mauryan flag at *Kumari* at the meeting of the three oceans."

It was now the beginning of 317 B. C. Takshasila was being hard pressed by Balagupta and his army. The siege of two years had told upon the morale of the defenders. The trade of this prosperous city had been ruined. The citizens became restive. Eudemos and his Greeks were more concerned with the war between Alexander's Generals in Asia Minor, than in defending Omphis's capital against the Mauryas. Eudemos's Chief Eumenes, who had killed Krateros in 321 B. C., was imploring him to get somehow some war-elephants and join him in his desperate struggle against Antigonos who was aided by Ptolemy, Peithon, son of Krateros, Seleukos and Nearchos. Omphis had only 30 elephants in all, and was not willing to let him go away with them. Nor would 30 elephants be of much use for Eumenes. The Mauryas had 9,000 war-elephants, and even Balagupta had 1,000 of them for the siege of Takshasila. Eudemos could not capture even a single

elephant of theirs. Nor could he buy any, as war-elephants were a royal monopoly all over India. The younger Poros had been assiduously collecting war-elephants, and had 120 of them with him. He had been very friendly with Eudemos, largely because of his envy of his uncle Poros Senior and, later on, of his cousin Malayaketu.

Eudemos had at first hoped that he could repeat Alexander's tactics, and defeat Balagupta and capture his 1,000 elephants. But a desperate sortie on New Year's Day 317 B. C. had ended in a debacle of his and Omphis's troops. Only the strong walls of Takshasila saved them from utter annihilation. This battle decided Eudemos. He concluded that Alexander was wise in not fighting these Prachyas. "Even if they lose these 1,000 elephants they have 8,000 more!" thought he, and shuddered.

The next day, when he was in deep despair, one of Omphis's ministers was narrating the story of Chanakya's bringing about the death of Parvataka and Vairochaka. An idea occurred to him. He sent a letter to the younger Poros to meet him on the banks of the *Indus* near Udabhandapura with all his war-elephants, suggesting to him a sudden attack on Malayaketu from the rear, and promising him the whole of the territories of Malayaketu. The avarice of Poros Junior was roused. He went to the appointed place with his 120 war-elephants and 2,000 cavalry and 3,000 infantry. Eudemos left Takshasila with 20,000 Greek troops telling Omphis that he would join Poros Junior and attack Malayaketu from behind, and force Balagupta's army to raise the siege and go to Malayaketu's help. He received from Omphis and the merchants of Takshasila ten-million *Suvarnas* for the expenses of this bold campaign, and was also thanked for so generously risking his Greek troops for the sake of an ally.

He went with his troops to the appointed meeting place in splendid military array. Poros Junior was delighted to see his ally arrive with such magnificent troops. Eudemos invited Poros to his tent to discuss some plans in secret. When the unsuspecting Poros went in, Eudemos suddenly picked up a spear and thrust it deep into his chest, and killed him instantly. His Greeks fell upon the unprepared troops of Poros, routed them with great slaughter, and captured all the 120 war-elephants. Eudemos and his Greeks then went away with the elephants and the ten-million *Suvarnas*, and joined Eumenes in Pontos.

The troops, elephants and money were of very great use to Eumenes in his fight with Antigonos, Seleukos, Peithon and Nearchos. But, even with their help his opponents proved too much for him. His own troops, despairing of victory, handed him over to Antigonos in 316 B. C. Despite the protests of Nearchos, Antigonos put Eumenes to death at once. No one protested when Antigonos put to death Eumenes's Lieutenant Eudemos, who thus met with a swift retribution for his treacherous murder of Poros Junior.

When the murder of Poros Junior and the defection of Eudemos with the elephants of Poros and with his troops and the ten-million *Suvarnas* became known in Takshasila, there was a great outcry against the Greeks and against Omphis who had been their great champion. The citizens opened the gates of the city to the Mauryan army. And, as Balagupta entered the city with his troops, Omphis committed suicide by jumping down from the top floor of his Palace. Balagupta allowed his corpse a royal funeral. Omphis left no son, or other near heir behind. Balagupta proclaimed the annexation of Takshasila and its entire territories to the Mauryan empire. Then, his victorious troops advanced up to the *Indus*, and even

crossed it and occupied Pushkalavati on the other side, the feeble Greek garrison there surrendering at the mere sight of Balagupta's hosts.

Balagupta was appointed the Viceroy of Takshasila by Chandragupta. His jurisdiction extended to the whole of the empire west of the *Sutlej* and north of Cutch, and included Kashmir, Punjab, Peshawar, Takshasila, Pushkalavati, Multan and the entire Indus valley up to the sea. Balagupta being an Aryaputra, that is, being related to the Emperor, his appointment was popular with Malayaketu, Saubhuti, Abhisara, Arsakes and the Kings of Kashmir and Sind, and the son of Poros Junior. Within a year Balagupta and his Ministers made Takshasila a Mauryan stronghold in the north.

Chandragupta, at the instance of Chanakya, issued a mandate to all the Mauryan Viceroys and Governors and Officers as to how to treat the conquered territories. It ran:—" Never treat the conquered people contemptuously. Treat them just as you would treat the people of Magadha. Punish all who offend against them. Never covet their lands, things or women. Preserve their laws, customs, holidays and religious ceremonies." The conquered peoples were delighted. They became firmly attached to their new ruler Chandragupta, and came to regard him as their own hereditary king. Even the conquered Rulers were treated with respect and consideration, and came to take pride because they were the agents of the Emperor. Within ten years of the conquests, the Mauryan Empire had become an established institution from Pushkalavati to Tamralipti, from Kashmir to Podiyil Hills.

CHAPTER XXX

THE CONQUERED CONQUEROR

ALEXANDER, when asked by the Companions as to whom he was leaving his kingdom, had replied with his dying breath, "To the strongest. I foresee a great funeral contest over my body." While his Generals were fighting with one another in order to see who was the strongest, after the wives, sons, half-brother and mother of the Great Conqueror had been murdered, Chandragupta had made himself master of the whole of India east of the *Indus* with the exception of a small bit in the extreme south. By 306 B.C., however, Seleukos Nikator was feeling himself secure on his throne at Babylon. He had come out very well from the general scramble. He had married Apama, daughter of the gallant Spitamenes of Sogdiana, and, by this enduring union, which contrasted strongly with the ephemeral unions of the other Macedonian Generals with their Asiatic wives, had endeared himself to the Asiatics and ensured an Asiatic empire for his descendants. He had at first aided Perdikkas and his cavalry against Meleager and his infantry, and had been made Chilliarch of the Companions, one of the highest offices. In that capacity he had followed Perdikkas to Egypt, and had there put

himself at the head of the mutineers by whom Perdikkas was assassinated. He had been given the Babylonian Satrapy at the second partition of the provinces made at Triparadeisos in 321 B.C. He had assisted Antigonos against Eumenes, and had then joined Ptolemy against Antigonos. By 306 B.C. he had become the master of all the provinces of the old empire of Alexander from the borders of Syria eastwards up to the *Indus* including Bactria, Sogdiana, Aria, Arachosia, Parapamasadai, Gedrosia and the whole of Persia and Babylonia, and had crowned himself King, after the example of Antigonos and Ptolemy. He was also just then at peace with Antigonos and other rivals, and so resolved to take this opportunity of recovering the Punjab west of the Hyphasis and the Indus valley annexed by Chandragupta.

He had heard vague accounts of the size of Chandragupta's empire and army. He had also heard much about the splendour of the Capital city Pataliputra, and of the Provincial Capitals at Takshasila and Ujjain, which were said to surpass Susa and Babylon in magnificence.

Seleukos regarded what he had heard of the greatness and wealth of Chandragupta's empire with satisfaction, as he felt sure that he could easily defeat the young man whom he had seen at Boukephala as a suppliant for Alexander's help. He considered Poros Senior to be a far more formidable opponent, and yet he and Alexander had defeated Poros and made him a vassal. And now, Poros had been murdered in mysterious circumstances by that black Brahmin, who was said to have effected the equally mysterious escape of Chandragupta from the dungeon. Omphis had warned Seleukos against the incantations of that black Brahmin, but Seleukos, proud of his great personal strength and courage, had laughed in his face, and challenged him to make all the black Brahmins

in the world do their worst to him. Alexander too had laughed on that occasion. Now Omphis also had gone, had committed suicide. A man who loved life so well to quit it like that! Well, one never knew what happened in that depressing Indian climate with its eerie nights and frequent deaths. Seleukos resolved that he would never live in India for good. He thought that the people were strange, almost lunatic, in their outlook. The best thing would be to get the Satrapies of Alexander in the Punjab and Sind back to the Empire, and to allow Chandragupta to rule the rest of India as his vassal. This last idea made Seleukos feel proud, for even Alexander had not been able to levy tribute from the King of the Prachyas.

So, early in B. C. 305, Seleukos sent an ultimatum to Chandragupta from Bactria asking him, on threat of an armed invasion and conquest, to surrender the Indus valley and the territories to the west of the Hyphasis, and to recognize Seleukos as his Suzerain for his remaining territories, and to pay a tribute of ten-million gold *Suvarnas* per year. Chandragupta consulted Chanakya, and sent the following reply:—

"His Majesty King Chandragupta, the Beloved of the Gods, sends his greetings to King Seleukos of Babylon, and categorically refuses every one of his ridiculous demands. There is no more justification for his demanding cession of territory or tribute from King Chandragupta than for King Chandragupta to demand cession of territory or tribute from him. King Chandragupta requests him not to be rash enough to press these absurd demands and invade India once more, and be forced to imitate, on a larger and more disastrous scale, the celebrated flight of his master Alexander, who left the bodies of three-fourths of

his troops in this country for the jackals and vultures to feed on. If, however, he persists in this foolish course and invades India, the Indian troops will be ready to deal with the living invaders, and the Indian jackals and vultures with the dead."

Seleukos was furious when he received this reply. He who had crossed the Hydaspes with Alexander and defeated the great Poros was being insulted like this by this boy suppliant of yesterday! He resolved to teach Chandragupta a lesson that he should never forget. He decided to advance on Pataliputra itself, and capture it and the great treasure of the Nandas. He gathered together an army of 1,00,000 Greeks and 2,00,000 Sogdians, Bactrians, Persians, Skythians, Sakas and others anxious for the spoils of Ind. Then he marched from Bactria into Parapamisadai at the head of this enormous and well-equipped force.

Chandragupta discussed the plan of campaign with Chanakya. "We are so strong that we had better induce the enemy to cross the *Indus*, and then smash his forces. This time it will be a real battle, and not a battle of intrigue," said he. "I agree with you in abandoning Pushkalavati, and in leaving the *Indus* crossing undefended, and in concentrating 4,00,000 infantry, 20,000 cavalry, 4,000 chariots and 6,000 elephants at Takshasila as you suggested yesterday. But, there will also be a battle of intrigue, beside the battle in the field. These Generals of Alexander have adopted the methods of our kings, and are relying on intrigue to a large extent. Seleukos considers himself to be a master of intrigue. Here is Siddharthaka's final despatch from Takshasila received with Balagupta's note. Seleukos approached Abhisara, Arsakes, Pushkaradatta, the son of Pushkaraksha, and

Malayaketu for aid against us. They, being men ot honour, at once communicated this to Balagupta who has, under my instructions, allowed those Princes to pretend to fall in with Seleukos's offer. So, we shall trap some of the Greeks like cattle. Indeed, I doubt whether there will be a battle at all," replied Chanakya. "I hope there will be something for me to do," said Chandragupta. "These campaigns seem to fizzle out of themselves."

Seleukos advanced on Pushkalavati with his mighty army. His daughter, Diophantes, was also with him. He was fond of her. She too was a spirited girl who loved excitement and adventure, and rode a horse as well as any man. Seleukos expected an easy victory and wanted to show his daughter his triumph. He was slightly disappointed at seeing Pushkalavati undefended. "The enemy is afraid of us," said he. The town was occupied and garrisoned. Then, Seleukos marched to Udabhandapura. The *Indus* crossing too was undefended. "There is going to be no war at all, it seems," said he to Diophantes. "Have these Indians given up fighting after the death of Poros?" "But, you have not got a welcome yet from Taxila, as Alexander had," said Diophantes. "That is easily explained," said Seleukos. "These eastern Indians are a more gloomy lot than Omphis and his men. Even if they know that they will be defeated, they will not accept that fact gladly, but will be sullen over it. You can't expect such people to welcome us."

News came that Chandragupta with an army of 4,00,000 infantry, 20,000 horse, 4,000 chariots and 6,000 elephants was awaiting the invaders at Takshasila. "What a gigantic army!" exclaimed Diophantes. "Numbers mean nothing," said Seleukos. "The rabble will melt away the moment the battle begins. If they were really courageous and confident of victory, they would not have

left Pushkalavati and the *Indus* crossing undefended." "Still, it will be a job getting through that serried mass of elephants and troops," said Diophantes. "We have got a fine plan of campaign," whispered Seleukos to her. "This huge army of theirs will be caught between two armies of ours, and made to surrender. Chandragupta's communications with Pataliputra will be cut off by our army and by the troops of Malayaketu. The drama will begin soon after we have crossed this undefended ford."

The Greek army crossed over to the other side in comfort. Seleukos encamped his host in the very plain where Alexander had encamped his. He offered sacrifices to the gods for his safe crossing, and held gymnastic and equestrian contests.

After taking rest there for a fortnight, fifty-thousand Greeks and a hundred-thousand mercenaries under Antiochos, the son of Seleukos, went, in accordance with the secret understanding with Abhisara, Arsakes, Pushkaradatta and Malayaketu, through the Baramula Pass into the Kashmir valley, in order to pass through the Kashmir-Gate (Banihal Pass) and take the Mauryan army in the rear. Diophantes, who had heard of the beauty of Kashmir, was anxious to see it, and accompanied her brother Antiochos. As they passed through the long mountain Pass with its exquisite scenery, she felt as if she were on Olympus. When they saw the vale of Kashmir surrounded by snow-capped mountains on all sides, her joy knew no bounds. "This is a veritable Paradise," said she, "and those lakes, Oh, how ravishingly beautiful!" She fell in love with the country at once. Arsakes was with the Greek army, and explained to Diophantes how Kashmir meant 'the country of the Sage Kasyapa,' and how it was a very sacred land. "Every land is sacred to its inhabitants," said Diophantes. "just as every life is sacred to its owner.

But, that this land is more beautiful than other lands is undoubted." They found the people of the valley very handsome, but not very warlike. "Kashmir," Arsakes explained, "is always ruled by the more warlike races, but its wise men migrate to the Gangetic plains, and become ministers and poets."

Antiochos and his troops spent two weeks in the Kashmir valley, enjoying the excellent climate and revelling in the fruits and flowers. Arsakes had gone on the pretext of getting the Banihal Pass route ready for the march. He had promised to return in two weeks, but failed to do so. Antiochos sent a messenger who returned stating that the Banihal Pass was closed by 1,00,000 troops belonging to Arsakes, Abhisara and the Mauryas. Panic-stricken by this news, Antiochos wanted to return through the Baramula Pass to Udabhandapura, but learnt to his consternation that it was also closed by another hundred-thousand Mauryan troops, detached from Takshasila as soon as the Greek army had entered the Kashmir valley.

"We are trapped," exclaimed Antiochos to Diophantes. "It is hopeless to escape through either of these long Passes with such a powerful enemy army guarding them." "Then, let us go on camping here," said Diophantes. "It is simply glorious. But seriously, Brother, is it hopeless to get through?" "Quite. Of course, we can try, but it will mean the loss of several thousands without any real chance of success. Pushkaradatta and Arsakes have sent word that we will be made very comfortable here till we are released after the war is over, provided we do not commit any act of violence against the inhabitants. 'Touch one of them,' say they, 'and we shall destroy you like rats." "So, what do you propose to do?" asked Diophantes. "Wait here till father wins the war and

comes to our rescue," said Antiochos. "He got us into this mess, in his pathetic faith in these barbarian Princes, and must get us out of it. I have sent an urgent messenger to him with the news." "How did he get through?" "Every messenger of ours is allowed to pass through after his message is scrutinised." "Hm! The black Brahmin again, I suppose!" "No. it is the handsome King who is responsible for this," said Antiochos. "Arsakes has given him a glowing description of you, and he seems to have been attracted by it. He has sent many an object of luxury to-day for you, a nice cot with the most splendid wood and ivory work I have seen, a fine mattress stuffed with cotton, and some amazingly fine cotton and silk *Sarees*." Diophantes examined them and exclaimed. "Oh, how fine! But, why did he send them?" "Why do men send things to pretty girls?" asked Antiochos.

Seleukos had waited with his other army of 1,50,000 men on the banks of the *Indus*, awaiting news of Antiochos's army taking the Mauryan army in the rear, before advancing to attack it from the front. After long waiting he received a message from Chandragupta which ran, "His Majesty King Chandragupta, Beloved of the Gods, sends his greetings to King Seleukos, and is happy to inform him that Prince Antiochos and Princess Devabhranta (Diophantes) are safe in Kashmir with the entire army, and will remain there till the war is over. No anxiety need be felt for their personal safety, unless they do some unbelievably rash thing like attacking the inhabitants, or trying to break through the Passes." Seleukos bit his lips in rage. A day later, a messenger came from Antiochos confirming the news. "The fool! the fool!" exclaimed Seleukos. "Not to post his men at convenient places on the Pass as he went in, and to leave it all to Arsakes and Abhisara! Well, I too am partly to blame for believing those vipers!"

He resolved forthwith to launch an attack on Takshasila and defeat Chandragupta, and thus rescue his son and daughter since it was hopeless to try to storm the long Baramula Pass. But, there was no enthusiasm among his Greek or mercenary troops at the suggestion of marching against the vastly superior enemy, especially after they had learnt about the fate of Antiochos and his army. Seleukos, however, led these unwilling men to Takshasila. A great battle was fought outside the walls of Takshasila, between the Mauryan army of 2,50,000 men and 6,000 elephants, led by Chandragupta, Chanakya, Bindusara and Balagupta, and the 1,50,000 men of Seleukos. The result was a foregone conclusion. The Mauryan elephants, led by Chandragupta's own elephant *Chandralekha*, made a fierce charge, and crashed through the terrified ranks of the Greeks and mercenaries of Seleukos, trampling several thousands of them to death and routing the rest. The Mauryan cavalry chased the fleeing men, and speared to death several hundreds of them. The Mauryan infantry, and especially the Malava, Kshudraka, Kathaian and Saindhava troops, attacked the Greeks and mercenaries with determination, and massacred whole regiments.

The mercenaries, finding that they were getting the worst of it, broke their ranks and fled. The Greeks fought on desperately, but lost heart on hearing that Chandragupta and Chanakya had given a million *Suvarnas* and stirred up the tribesmen of Aria, Arachosia, Gedrosia and Parapamisadai, who had massacred their Greek Governors and garrisons, and taken Pushkalavati and closed the Passes, and burnt the bridge of boats across the *Indus*, and thus effectually cut off their communications with Persia and Babylon. "There is no use fighting any further," said Seleukos to his General Demetrios. "We had better make peace and clear out of this mess, and rescue our troops in Kashmir. Men are no match

for these beasts. Poros's elephants were not properly trained, and had no expert mahouts. That is why Poros failed at the battle of the Hydaspes. Chandragupta's elephants and mahouts are superb. If I can only get 500 of his elephants and mahouts, I can smash Antigonos. After all, we are more interested in fighting him and gaining Syria and Asia Minor, than in fighting Chandragupta. We may very well give up to Chandragupta these troublesome provinces of Aria, Arachosia, Parapamisadai and eastern Gedrosia for 500 such elephants."

Demetrios too agreed. Seleukos sent messengers to Chandragupta with his terms, which were at once accepted by Chandragupta and Chanakya. Chandragupta had received such high accounts of the beauty and accomplishments of Diophantes, that he had fallen in love with her. He requested Seleukos to give her hand in marriage to him. "Most willingly," said Seleukos. "That will cement our treaty of perpetual alliance and friendship."

So, the treaty of Takshasila was signed in 303 B.C., and Antiochos and his troops were released from the Kashmir valley, which they left with great regret as they had come to love it and its inhabitants. The Mauryan troops advanced and occupied the four provinces newly ceded to the Empire by Seleukos and added to the Viceroyalty of Takshasila. In grateful recognition of their invaluable services, Chandragupta remitted one-half of the tributes of Abhisara, Arsakes, Malayaketu and Pushkaradatta for fifty years.

When Devabhranta was told about her forthcoming marriage, she was highly pleased. When she saw Chandragupta, this pleasure greatly increased. Chandragupta, for his part, was also deeply in love with her. The marriage was celebrated with great pomp at Takshasila itself,

When Devabhranta went into the nuptials chamber that night, Chandragupta said to her, "People outside are shouting out, 'The Conqueror conquered!' Do they mean my victory over your father, or your victory over me?" "Perhaps both," said she, embracing him with warmth.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE CONVOCATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TAKSHASILA

THE vast grounds in front of the great hall of the University of Takshasila were gaily decorated with leaves and flowers and festoons and buntings. A hundred-thousand savants and scholars and on-lookers had gathered from all over India and the neighbouring countries. For it was Convocation Day, and the Emperor Chandragupta, fresh from his brilliant victories and conquests, was going to preside and give away the prizes, grants and certificates with his own hand, and the great Chanakya was going to deliver the Convocation Address to the out-going scholars. For over a month there had been continuous feasting on a most lavish scale at the Emperor's expense, and the most exciting contests between the giants of learning and the arts. Never had there been such bustle and joy in the city's whole history.

Punctually at 8 a.m., the great drums and bugles sounded, and the Emperor marched to the place attended by Chanakya, Balagupta, and Rajasena, and accompanied by the young Prince Bindusara. Loud and spontaneous shouts of "Long live our gracious King Chandragupta!" rent the

air. Dharmaratna, the head of the University, went and received them, and seated the Emperor on the throne set in the centre of the dais. Balagupta was seated behind him, Bindusara to the Emperor's right, and Chanakya to the Emperor's left. Dharmaratna then sat down to the left of Chanakya.

After the audience had resumed silence, Dharmaratna rose and said, " The first item is prayer. I shall begin it as usual." Then the whole audience rose and repeated after Dharmaratna the familiar and famous prayer :—

" Thousands of heads has He,
Thousands of eyes to see,
Thousands of feet has He,
The Great Primeval One.

The universe He folds
In His loving embrace
And stretches far beyond,
The Great Primeval One."

" Brother scholars from the four corners of Bharatavarsha and the lands beyond ! This is a unique occasion in the annals of this ancient University. To-day we have an Emperor himself presiding over our Covocation, and he is an Emperor not merely in name, but an Emperor among men. He is an ideal Kshatriya, and has proved it during all these years, and especially during the last war with the powerful and heroic Yavanas. He is reckless not only in war, but also in gifts. Our physicians have been kept busy these thirty days administering to those who ate over-much of the good things given in such abundance by our Sovereign. The value of the prizes and the grants to be distributed to-day is well known to you. I need only say that they are worthy of such a King. All of us welcome the Emperor and the Crown

Prince Bindusara to our midst, and wish them every prosperity and blessing. The Emperor and the Prince have graciously consented to accept the titles of "Raja Narendra," and "Amitraghata" conferred by the Council of Elders of this University. This is the first occasion when such political titles have been granted by our University, and the first recipients are unique among men. Our King is really an Indra among men, and our Prince fought and killed the enemy in the late war like a veritable Abhimanyu[1], though he is only in his fifteenth year now.

"Another thing which gratifies me very much to-day is that my friend, His Excellency the venerable Chanakya, an 'old boy' of our University, has kindly consented to come and deliver the Address. I need not introduce Chanakya to you. His learning is such that, in this great assemblage of savants and scholars, not one dared to contest with him for the prize for *Arthasastra*, and so he magnanimously stood aside and became the Judge, and held one of the keenest competitions known here. His mastery of the *Vedas* is well known. His practical skill is seen in his quickly rescuing the Scriptures and the world which had passsed to the Nanda King, and in meeting successfully both internal revolt and external invasion. His self-denial is such that he, the Prime Minister of the Greatest Empire of the world, lives in a house which is much worse than many a humble man's abode. The firm establishment of our ancient *Dharma* is his life's goal and mission. Advice from such a man is like priceless gold.

"Then, the contests we have had! Of the hundred-and-twenty-eight first prizes we are awarding to-day, sixty-four for the Sciences and sixty-four for the Arts,

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1. A great hero of the *Mahabharata*.

I have no time to talk in detail. Nor need any one in this vast audience be reminded of the exciting contests. I shall repeat, as usual, the eight best *Sutra* sayings[2] in the books of this year. The first is 'Health is harmony,' expounded by the health expert who explained the principle of a harmonious combination of physical, mental and moral health. The next is 'A man becomes a god by doing that which no man can do.' A Brahmin of Sind said this to Alexander. The third is Chanakya's own *Sutra*. 'The whole world revolves on the belly,' (laughter). The fourth is, 'Live with honour or die with honour,' the advice given by the Brahmins to Sambos. The fifth is again Chanakya's; 'A king must completely identify himself with his subjects. In their joy lies his joy, in their sorrow, his sorrow." The sixth is that of Vishnusuri, and runs, 'Do not sell knowledge." The seventh is that of Dandiswami, 'The paths to God are as many as the paths of the birds in the air, or of fish under the waters, or of rivers to the sea.' The eighth is that of Kalyanaswami, and runs, 'Foreigners are foreigners only till they become natives, and conquerors are conquerors only till they become kings.'

"So much for the Sciences. Turning to the Arts, the Juggler who took the Emperor's ring in his very presence without his knowing it, but failed to take the same ring from Chanakya, must have given you as much excitement as he gave me. It is easier to get wealth from a Kshatriya than from a Brahmin! (laughter). That Juggler has also publicly, and in broad daylight, exhibited to the people the arts of levitation, and the rope-trick, and burial for three days, and swallowing of mercury and snake-poison. His reading of questions in sealed covers,

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2. Short pithy expressions of great truths.

his producing any scents required of him, and his bringing a dead bird to life for a short time are also worth mentioning. These things will be familiar to the savants, and do not perhaps interest them as much as the discussions. But they have their own value. Then, again, the Painter who could draw accurate paintings of people shown just once, and the Doctor who used to get himself bitten by scorpions and snakes, and get immediately cured with his own medicines must have interested most of you. The Sculptor who has prepared the granite statues of our great Emperor and of Seleukos seated on lions and holding a lotus flower and grapes respectively, must also have excited the admiration of all. How such polish can be imparted to such refractory material, he alone can explain. The man who fought a lion, a tiger, a boar and a mad elephant in succession single-handed in the ring and triumphed over them all, none of us would grudge his prize. Nor does any one here grudge the prize of the Musician who played with equal facility on a hundred different instruments, and made air, fire, earth, water and ether all give out immortal notes of unforgettable melody, or of his lady-partner who sang adjusting her melodious voice to one and all of the many-shaped multi-sounding instruments. We have also nothing but admiration for the Hero who, blindfolded, shot with precision at the mud pot which was sounded ninth among eighteen similar pots ranged in a row, shot at a wooden ball in a pond and made it shoot up sixty feet in the air, cut off the head of a big buffalo with a single stroke, and with the same sword severed a lime placed on a man's fore-arm without even scratching the arm. Lastly, the Master-Spy Jeevasiddhi, with his uncanny finding out of our secrets within a given time, must have made us all wish that he could with equal facility wring from Nature her hidden secrets, for

example, find out how to cause rain to fall, and how to eradicate disease and suffering. Aryas! our most gracious Emperor Raja Narendra, will now distribute the prizes."

Chandragupta then rose and said, "Aryas! it gives me the purest pleasure to be in the midst of this great and learned assembly. I have, as you know, never shirked a war. But I have always felt a keener and purer pleasure in witnessing contests among learned men. For the last one month, I have been able to witness now and then some of the most exciting of your contests, which have already been described to you in such felicitous terms by your head. You may rest assured that the welfare of your University will be carefully looked after by me and my descendants. There shall be instituted at once here a college for *Arthasastra*. The revenues from fifty villages have been assigned for this purpose (loud shouts of "Long live Raja Narendra," "Long live Prince Bindusara Amitraghata)." I thank you all for your kindly conferring titles on me and your Prince. Believe me, we cherish them deeply. To show how much I love you I shall make Amitraghata Viceroy of Takshasila as soon as he attains his sixteenth year (loud applause).

"Now, proceeding to distribute the prizes, I confer the title of *Kulapati* on the venerable Dharmaratna, with the revenues of ten villages to keep it up. (Dharmaratna rises up astonished and pleased. Then are heard shouts of "Long live Raja Narendra," "Long live Amitraghata," "Long live Kulapati Dharmaratna)." Dharmaratna simply said, "I bow to Raja Narendra. I bow to Amitraghata. I bow to the venerable Chanakya. I bow to the assembly. I pray to the gods that I may be found worthy of the great title conferred on me to-day."

Thereafter the Emperor distributed the other prizes and titles amidst many shouts and rejoicings. "See the light in his eyes when he gives," said the members of the audience to one another. "He likes to give. He is a real Kshatriya. What a contrast to the mean and grasping Nanda King!"

Then rose Chanakya amidst deafening cheers. "Raja Narendra, Prince Bindusara Amitraghata, and Kulapati Dharmaratna, brother savants and scholars, and noble Aryas! I am delighted beyond words at being invited to deliver the Address at the Convocation of this old University, of which I am a humble alumnus. When I remember all the great men who have delivered the Addresses here before me, my heart rejoices at having been selected to join their company. I prize this more than being the Prime Minister of this Great Empire. A Prime Minister has many unpleasant things to do. He has mercilessly to root out the enemies of the Empire, a necessary but often cruel work. Fools and knaves, who stand in the way of the general well-being, have to be plucked out and burnt like the weeds in a field. The cares of the Empire make the hairs grey more quickly than even nightly gazing at the stars to find out the secrets of the skies, or the daily reading of Grammar. This is one of the few occasions when I can talk freely and at ease with friends, and with no hidden meaning or intention. I wanted to deliver a speech of my own, which would be worthy of the occasion. Seven times I wrote out a speech, as I write out new writs, but each time there was some defect or other. Sometimes it was dignity that was wanting, sometimes it was sweetness, sometimes it was lucidity, sometimes it was sequence or flow, and sometimes it was completeness. Finally, I came to the conclusion that there was nothing which

I could write which could equal the famous speech of the Great Master on a like occasion[3], and that the best thing I could do would be to deliver the same speech to you with additions, illustrations and explanations wherever necessary. I proceed forthwith to do so.

"Speak the truth. This is the ke[illegible]ll learning and religion. All your learning is [illegible] out Truth which is God. Nev[illegible] sight [illegible]eat injunction of old. If at all yo[illegible] you must speak the truth, [illegible] Of course, the thing is not [illegible] stated in the *Mahabharata,* [illegible] knows the distinction betwee[illegible] all its aspects.' The great Sag[illegible] was inordinately fond of his fame as [illegible] speaker of [illegible], and so failed to realise the truth that [illegible] was less important than the lives of innocent fellow-beings. One day, when doing penance in the forest, he saw a helpless wayfarer being pursued by a dozen murderous dacoits. The wayfarer hid himself in some bushes near the Sage. The dacoits approached the Sage and asked him where the poor refugee was. Proud of his reputation for truth, he disdained to utter a lie, and pointed out the hiding place. The dacoits dragged out the poor man and killed him at once. For this, Kausika Satyavadin got ten-thousand years in Hell, despite all his passionate clinging to truth. He asked Sri Krishna indignantly, 'God is Truth. So, should I not have uttered the truth at all costs? Why punish me for this?' Krishna replied, 'But God can protect the innocent against all villains. You evidently could not. So, you should have kept silent and taken the risk, or even uttered a white lie and saved the man, incurring a small sin for

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3. It is given in the Upanishads.

avoiding a graver one. In your egotism you forgot that elementary truth, and are now prating about your equality with God.' Kausika kept silent. So, brother Aryas, in war, in love, in innocent social functions, in gambling, and in joke, and of course, in works of imagination, the rigidity of Truth can be relaxed a little. A little sin will no doubt be incurred, but graver sins will be avoided. That is also why our Sages have said, 'Speak the truth, but not the unpleasant truth. Speak what is pleasant, but not what is untrue.' Truly it is difficult even for the saint to distinguish between truth and falsehood. Still, we must try and speak the truth on all but the exceptional occasions mentioned above. Once, God took Truth out of Himself and put it in one scale of the balance; and put the remaining part of Himself in the other. Truth weighed heavily, and the other scale went up sky-high because of its lightness. Thereafter, Sages called God '*Satya*' or Truth.

"Practise the *Dharma* of your respective castes. Let each one among you realise himself by knowing himself, and doing the things prescribed for his caste. One's own *Dharma* leads to salvation, another's *Dharma* is full of danger at every turn. A teacher must teach, a barber must shave, a soldier must fight. If a barber turn teacher, or teacher turn barber, the results may not be happy.

"Neglect not the daily recitation of your *Vedas*. In the *Vedas* lie your distinction, power and hope. Recite them daily, and you can become gods. Neglect them, and you become feeble and commonplace.

"Give your preceptor on parting, something or other which he loves. Love and gratitude can often be expressed only by such material gifts. Thus you can show your gratitude for the immense service he has rendered you.

Give according to your ability. But give something. Don't be barren cows eating up grass greedily, and giving nothing in return.

"Go home, and get married, and see that the line of your progeny is not broken. You are not isolated units in the scheme of life, You are the descendants of your ancestors, and the ancestors of your descendants. Don't break the chain of life. Don't put out the torch of descent. You owe your debts to the gods, to the *Rishis*, and to your ancestors. Perform sacrifices regularly, and discharge the debts to the gods. Read the *Vedas* and *Sastras*, and discharge your debts to the *Rishis*. Leave at least a child behind, and discharge the debt to your ancestors.

"You must not neglect the rites to the gods. You must not neglect the reading of the *Vedas*. You must not neglect the rites to the ancestors.

"You must not neglect your own welfare. Worship your mother as a god, worship your father as a god, worship your teacher as a god, worship your guest as a god.

"Those acts that are above reproach, those alone shall you do, and none others. Study and imitate only those acts of ours which are good, and none others. To Brahmins or holy men who are superior to us, offer your seats, and remove their fatigue, and listen to their wisdom with bated breath.

"You must give your gifts with faith. You must not give without faith. But give even without faith, rather than not give at all. Give according to your means. Give from fear of the Great Giver, who may withhold His gifts if you withhold yours. Give from friendship. Give from fellow-feeling. Give from very shame at not giving when so many others like you give.

"Should doubts arise in your mind regarding the propriety of any act or conduct, follow those that are devoted to wise deliberations and sober judgments, those that are assiduous and intent, those that are gentle and not swayed by violent passions, and those that are desirous of performing their duties. Act as these act in such matters.

"As regards those who have been accused of some sin or crime, follow the practice of those that are given to wise deliberations and sober judgments, those that are assiduous and intent, those that are gentle and are not swayed by violent passions. As these act towards them so should you act.

"This is the commandment, this is the advice, this is the hidden import of the *Vedas*, this is the instruction and message. Thus should it be acted upon with faith and reverence. Om Santi Santi Santi!"[4]

Chanakya sat down. Then Dharmaratna said, "Aryas! we have heard the familiar old words of wisdom explained anew by the venerable Chanakya with his characteristic sweetness and lucidity. I cannot thank him sufficiently for the trouble he has taken in coming here and delivering the Address.' Nor can we express adequately our deep debt of gratitude to our beloved Sovereign and Prince. Now we shall adjourn after the concluding prayer. I shall lead." He repeated the famous prayer.

"*Asato ma sat gamaya*
Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya
Mrityor ma amritam gamaya"

(Lead us, oh Lord, from Untruth to Truth,
Lead us, oh Lord, from Darkness to Light'
Lead us, oh Lord, from Death to Life)

and the vast audience repeated it after him.

4. Peace be on all the worlds!

Then the Emperor declared the Convocation closed, amidst a *Mangalam*[5] song which ran:

" May the holy land of Bharata,
Guarded by the mountains and the sea,
Never stray from the path of *Dharma*,
Whatever her future Fate may be "

5. Auspicious concluding verse.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE ADMIRAL RETURNS

ADMIRAL Samudranatha arrived at Pataliputra from Tamralipti after completing his expedition of exploration and conquest of the isles and coasts of Ind. Chandragupta, who had returned from Takshasila one month earlier, after the Convocation there, received him at a special levee attended by Prince Bindusara and by Chanakya, Rakshasa and other ministers, nobles and citizens; and asked him to give an account of his voyage. The queens Santavati, Durdhara and Devabhranta were seated behind a curtain. Samudranatha began his story:

"Sire, as commanded by Your Majesty and the venerable Chanakya, I proceeded with the hundred ships newly built for the purpose, and carrying a thousand sailors and a thousand merchants, and provisions sufficient for two years. The first place where we touched was Kalingapatnam, the sea-port of the Kalingas. There we found the very finest ivory from the Dasarna[1] country. A great many ships were going from there to the far eastern islands, Sumatra, Java, Madura, Bali, etc., across the sea, as

1. Orissa.

also to Suvarnabhumi[2] and Malaya, and to Simhala or Nagadvipa[3], wherefrom wonderful pearls were being imported. The Captains of some of the Kalinga ships told us strange stories of monsters of the deep, sea-serpents, whales, sea-dogs, sea-hares, sea-wolves, sea-pigs, sea-cows, etc. They told us also of islands in the middle of the Kalinga sea[4], the northern group of islands being called the Andamans, and the southern group the Nagnadvipa[5]. The men and women of these islands were said to be black and naked, and to be indistinguishable from a distance, and to be also, in some places, given to cannibalism.

"Our curiosity was roused. We had the accounts corroborated at the Kalinga capital, Parthivapura.[6] We resolved to visit the islands. We sailed to the northern group of these islands, taking some Kalinga guides with us. We found those islands just as they had been described to us. We proclaimed to the inhabitants, through our guides, the might of Your Majesty, and planted Your Majesty's glorious flag, showing the Moon rising behind the mountain and a Peacock dancing in the fore-ground. The islanders were highly pleased with the coloured flags, and asked for a few spare ones for their Chiefs. We gave them these. We gave also some clothes to the naked women. But, instead of wearing them round their loins they tied them round their heads, and danced about in high glee!" "Savages and monkeys are alike," said Rakshasa. "They appreciate dress as an ornament, and not as an article of decency." "Even civilised women are not very different," said Chanakya.

2. Burma.
3. Ceylon.
4. The Bay of Bengal
5. The Nicobars.
6. Parthalis of Megasthenes.

Samudranatha proceeded: "We left the northern group of islands, and sailed to the southern group. The people of Nagnadvipa were more ferocious than the lazy islanders of the northern group. Here we found also some cannibals. When one of our men went to pluck some cocoanuts from the hinterland, some islanders surrounded him and killed him, and ate him up raw before we could gather sufficient force and go to his rescue. But we did attack them finally, and killed a hundred of them. Then we left the island in disgust. But, there was another island adjoining it, and a narrow strait in between. Our ships were dragged into that strait in a sudden storm, and eighteen of them were dashed against the rocks, killing a hundred-and-fifty of our men. 'This is the penalty for our killing the ignorant cannibals, for following their ancestral custom,' said a Brahmin Priest in one of our remaining ships. The sailors were furious. The Captain of that ship, in a rage, put that Brahmin ashore saying, 'Live with your cannibals and follow your ancestral customs.' The Brahmin wept and wailed, but the ships sailed on." "What became of him finally?" asked Rakshasa. "We must go back to the island to ascertain that," said Samudranatha amidst laughter.

"Then we sailed on eastwards to Sumatra, Java, Madura, Bali, Matan,[7] Champa[8] and Kambhoja[9] and found there vast new lands slowly being brought under cultivation by settlers from Vanga, Kalinga, Dravida, Simhala, Kerala and Saurashtra with the aid of hordes of enthusiastic natives. There were no cannibals in these islands, except in the interior of Sumatra and Matan. Great quantities of tin and zinc were being mined in

7. Borneo.
8. Annam.
9. Cambodia.

Malaya. Cinnamon and cassia, cardamoms, cloves and nutmegs grow in all these islands in plenty. There is also a peculiar tree there which exudes a thick viscous liquid which, when dried up and rolled into balls, jumps up and down like a thing alive. I have brought three such balls." With this he handed over three small balls of rubber of the size of tennis-balls. The Emperor threw one down on the floor with force, and it jumped up to the ceiling to the wonder and joy of the assembled multitude. Devabhranta, who had seen this from behind the curtains, sent for a ball at once for exhibiting it to the ladies, and then sending it to her father Seleukos as a wonder of the East. Chanakya gravely took a ball in his hand, pressed it, smelt it, threw it gently on the floor, kept on rebounding it a number of times, and then handed it over to Rakshasa. "It is a wonderful thing," said Rakshasa, after feeling it. "But, still, I doubt whether it is fit for being sent to Seleukos." "Its wonder will be ever-lasting," said Chanakya. "It is one of the articles of the future."

"From the eastern islands we sailed westwards to Simhala, which is also known as Nagadvipa or Tamraparni," continued Samudranatha. "Its capital is Anuradhapura. The King feasted us sumptuously, and made many enquiries about Your Majesty and praised Your Majesty's wisdom, referring to the way in which the lion was let out of the cage. He gave a dozen priceless pearl-necklaces, and a pair of tusks 7 feet 6 inches long, and capable of holding a gallon of water each, to Your Majesty as a humble token of his esteem. He was so much taken up with Your Majesty's title 'Devanampriya[10],' that he has also craved Your Majesty's indulgence to assume it for

10. The beloved of the gods.

the kings of his line." Samudranatha then handed over the necklaces and the tusks, which were greatly admired. Chanakya gave his opinion that the pearls were finer than any from the Pandya country, and the tusks finer than the best Kerala and Kalinga ones. "Is the island of Simhala very fertile?" asked Rakshasa. "So fertile that there is a saying that even an iron rod planted there will put forth leaves and flowers the next morning," replied Samudranatha. "I think it must be a rich country, seeing that such pearls and tusks are found there," said Chanakya. "And there are also thousands and thousands of cocoanut and arecanut trees," said Samudranatha.

He continued: "From Lanka[11] we sailed up the west coast of India. First came *Kumari*[12], the southern extremity of our country, where there is the celebrated temple of the Goddess Kumari. There at the junction of three oceans, the Goddess Kumari, with a view to marry Siva, collected enormous quantities of rice, dhal, blackgram, vegetables and other provisions for giving a wedding-feast to all created beings, besides gold-dust for presenting to Brahmins. Then she prayed to Siva, and did the severest penance for accomplishing her wish. Siva having already married Meenakshi of the adjoining Pandya country, was unable to marry her. So, he sent Vishnu with a message 'Kanya Kumari!' (Remain a maiden, oh daughter) to the Goddess Kumari. She was so stricken with sorrow that she and all her provisions turned to stone. The place was named *Kanya Kumari* after this incident. The beautitul idol in the temple there, and the sands resembling rice, blackgram, gold-dust and vegetables are a proof of the truth of the story. *Kumari* is in

11. Colombo.
12. Cape Comorin.

the Keralaputra country which is in Tamilakam, or the Tamil land, from which the venerable Chanakya comes. Tamilakam comprises the Chola, Pandya and Keralaputra countries. Things are very different there from here. Many strange and curious customs flourish there. We feel as if we are in a different world." "Describe the religion and customs in some detail," said Chandragupta. "We would like to hear a description of Acharya Chanakya's land." "As Your Majesty orders," said Samudranatha. "*Kumari*, or, *Bhagawati* is the favourite deity of the Keralaputra country, as *Kumara*, or, *Andi* is the favourite deity of the Pandya country, and *Siva*, or, *Pasupati* is the favourite deity of the Chola country. *Kumari* is unmarried unlike our *Kali*. *Kumara* is married to a goddess called *Valli*, unlike our Kartikeya. *Pasupati* is the creator, preserver and destroyer, all in one, unlike our *Siva*, who is only the destroyer. In the South things called by much the same names as here, are thus really quite different. This is not only regarding gods, but also regarding men.

"While here full dress is a sign of high rank, over there full dress is the sign of a servant. Servants are asked to be dressed from head to foot, so that their ignoble limbs may not hurt noble eyes! Brahmins and nobles wear only a loin cloth. The Brahmins there are generally darker than our Sudras here, but do not touch flesh, or fish, or eggs. They are all called *Paupars* ('readers of the vedas') or *Ayyars* ('honoured Aryas') and even the common people are addressed as 'Ayya' or Arya. The language of Tamilakam is called *Tamil*, and is said to have been invented by the Aryan Sage Agastya. But it is spoken and written more differently from Sanskrit, than Kharoshti, or even the language of the Parsikas or Yavanas.

"There are three Kings in this Tamil country, ruling over the three Kingdoms of Chola, Pandya, and Keralaputra.

They rule their countries well, but are always at war with one another. They have five great assemblies to aid them ; one is composed of the representatives of the people ; another of the Physicians : another of the Astrologers; another of the Priests : and the fifth of Government Officials and Judges. The Queen always sits with the King at Public functions. Land revenue, customs and tolls form the chief sources of revenue. In the Pandya kingdom, slaves and condemned men are made to go under the sea and bring out pearls, which form a valuable source of revenue like the sale of elephants in the Keralaputra Kingdom, and tributes from subdued kings in the Chola Kindom.

" Our Caste System does not exist there. There are three main divisions, Brahmins, Tamils and Pariahs. The Brahmins are respected, but are a class apart. The Tamils are divided into five classes, namely, the sages, the farmers, the shepherds, the soldiers, and fishermen and scavengers. Women move freely among men, and marriages are often settled by the young people themselves.

" Music, dancing, feasts and quail-fighting are the amusements. Dramas are popular, and are frequently enacted with much singing ond dancing. There are festivals to Indra, Kumara, Siva and Kumari. The armies consist of elephants, cavalry, chariots and infantry, as with us, but all three Tamil Kingdoms have very strong navies, and especially the Pandya Kings, who have the 'fish' as their fitting emblem to symbolise the mastery of the seas. They do not think much of defeats on land, but take to heart defeats at sea. The Kings call themselves 'Kaliyuga Ramas,' as they have also successfully invaded Ceylon now and then. The Cholas are strong in infantry, and have the 'tiger' as their appropriate emblem. The

Keralaputras are strong in elephantry. They make up by words what they lack in warlike deeds. Thus, one of their Kings called himself 'Conqueror of the Himalayas,' by calling the Western Ghats the Himalayas of Kerala, and crossing them.

"All the three Tamil Kingdoms are weak in cavalry. Their saying, 'God in his mercy did not give horns to horses and hills,' shows their dread of high-mettled horses. They import a number of very fine Arab steeds, but ride them charily, and usually engage Arab horsemen to ride them.

"But the soldiers are brave. Once a mother heard that her son had fled from a battle, and so went with a sword to the battle-field in order to cut off the breasts that suckled him, if the news was true. She rejoiced to see him among the slain.

"The Kings move freely among the men, and cheer up the wounded. There is a close personal touch between the rulers and the ruled. That is why the people are quite ready to fight for their independence even against us. As one man told me at Kaveripumpattinam, 'Sir, we prefer to have a King for ourselves instead of being a Province of a distant Emperor.'

"After our victories at Podiyil hill, our prestige has increased with all the Tamil Kings. They talk of the Mauryas with respect, now, but add also: 'Our Chanakya too is partly responsible for this.'" "Certainly," said Chandragupta. "The account you have given of the south country is very interesting." "It is also accurate and impartial," said Chanakya.

"Is the Keralaputra country very rich?" asked Rakshasa. "I should say so," replied Samudranatha. "It has wonderful timber trees like ebony, rosewood, teakwood

and sandalwood; it has many fruit trees like the cocoanut, arecanut, plantain and jack; it has valuable spices like pepper, long-pepper, nutmegs, cardamoms, cinnamon and cloves; it has precious stones like beryls and diamonds; it also trades in iron and other articles got from the interior. It has many fine ports, Bakare, Muziris, Porakad, Nilkant, Kadalundi and Kannanura. It has got a clean and handsome people, and many fine backwaters and gardens. There are enormous numbers of all kinds of ships there, and a brisk trade is carried on with Arabia, and other distant places.

"From Keralaputra we went to the Satyaputra country, with its capital at Mangaloura. The same kinds of things, but lesser in quantity than in Keralaputra, are found in Satyaputra. The language is not Tamil, but an allied one. There is only one port, and the country itself is small.

"Then we went to the Kannada country. We saw Karwar, Honavara, Gokarna with its famous temple of Siva, the Kannadi islands, the Anjidvipa[13] and Sasigriva islands[14], and the port of Goa. Pirates abounded on this coast, but kept clear of us on seeing our strength. The Keralaputra coast was being kept free of pirates by the King's fleet, like the Pandyan and Chola coasts. The Pandyas, Cholas and Cheras form part of a distinct division of the 'Dakshinapatha,' called *Tamilakam*, below the river *Pennar* and the Venkata Hills. The greatest rivers there are the Northern Pennar, Palar, Southern Pennar, Kaveri, Vaigai, and Tamraparni. The Tamraparni is the southernmost river in all *Jambudvipa*. The rivers of Keralaputra and Satyaputra are not very large, though they are flooded during the monsoon!

13. Oyster islands.

14. Vengurla rocks.

"From the pirate-infested Kannada coast we proceeded northwards to Aranyavaha or *Mahalavana*[15], Ratnagiri, Paripatana, Mandaragiri, Vijayadurga, Devgarh and Champavati. Then we went to Kalyan, the great western port of the Andhra country. There were two great inland cities of Dhanyakheta and Pratishthana, sending corn and clothes to Kalyan. The Andhras too keep their ports free from pirates.

"From Kalyan we went to our own port of Surat and Bharukachcha at the mouths of the *Tapti* and the *Narmada* respectively. From there we went to Ujjain. Thereafter we went to Somnath, Dwaraka, Mandvi and Patala in our own realm. Then, we returned rounding the whole west coast, and touched at the ports of the east coast.

"We passed the famous Pamban and Palk straits, and worshipped at Rameswaram, after bathing at *Dhanushkodi* and Talaimannar. Oh, it was such a wonderful experience! The mass of foam there did justify the name 'Sea of Milk.' Then we went to Korkai, the great port of the Pandyas, full of ships from all the countries of the world, and having marvellous buildings built with brick and wood, but inlaid with pearls and corals. We went from there to Madura, and saw the famous temple there.

"Then we went to Kaveripattinam, and saw the equally splendid and busy port of the Cholas. We went inland to Uraiyur and Arkot, the capital of the Cholas, fine cities with stately buildings. We then touched at Nagapattinam and Puducheri, two other ports of the Cholas. Though the Cholas have more ports than the Pandyas, they are better as soldiers than as sailors. We also visited Kanchi, recently conquered by our troops, and worshipped at the

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15. Malwan.

famous *Kamakshi* temple there. The king of Mohur, who owned the city formerly, is now very quiet and submissive.

"Then we went to Machilipatnam in the Andhra country, with its fine cotton clothes. Here the language is not Tamil, but a language nearer ours. We visited the famous cities of Amaravati, Rajapura and Dantapura from there. People there were more like us than the Tamils. From Machilipatnam we set sail for Tamralipti, and reached there sixteen months and three days after we set sail, and with 345 sailors and 840 merchants left out of the original 1,000 sailors and 1,000 merchants. And, now, Gracious Sovereign who rules from Patala to Patali[16], I await your furthur commands."

"The dependants of each of the sailors who perished in this voyage will be given a thousand *Panas*. Every sailor who survives is given five-hundred *Panas*. The royal navy will be strengthened, and will consist of 1,000 ships hereafter. You are made a *Sreshti* and our Admiral for ten years more, with an allowance of 24,000 *Panas* per year," said Chandragupta. Samudranatha Sreshti then saluted the King, and withdrew from the Royal presence.

16. That is, from Patala in Sind to Pataliputra.

CHAPTER XXXIII

MEGASTHENES AT PATALIPUTRA

IN 301 B. C., two years after the Treaty of Takshasila, Seleukos, in conjunction with Ptolemy, Lysimachos, and Kassender, fought the famous battle of Ipsos against Antigonos and his son Demetrios. The elephants given by Chandragupta turned the scales against Antigonos, who was defeated and killed, and his former territories divided among his rivals. Seleukos got the whole of Syria and the larger part of Asia Minor as his share. Soon afterwards, in 300 B. C., he sent his friend and companion Megasthenes, who had been employed under Sibyrtios, the Satrap of Arachosia till its cession to Chandragupta, as envoy to the Mauryan court at Pataliputra with presents of figs, raisin wine, olive oil, dates, and some rare Greek vases. Megasthenes was received by Aryamitra, the Mauryan Governor of Ariana[1] at the frontier town of Herat[2], on behalf of Bindusara who was now the Viceroy of Takshasila. Thereafter he was a State-guest of Chandragupta ; Siddharthaka, the President of the Committee in charge of foreigners, looked after his arrangements. He was taken by

1. Harivana.
2. Haristhala.

Siddharthaka to Takshasila *via* Udabhandapura. The crossing of the *Indus* was in a fine royal barge, and was to the accompaniment of music. "This is our way of receiving guests," said Siddharthaka. At Takshasila Megasthenes was received by Bindusara, who gave a banquet in his honour, and, in his turn, ate the figs and dates given to him by Megasthenes, and liked them immensely, and especially the figs which he declared to be the sweetest fruits he had ever eaten.

From Takshasila Megasthenes went by the great royal road to Pataliputra. He was immensely pleased to see that the road was 48 feet broad, and had shady trees on both sides with mile-stones every $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles, and with wells and choultries every eight miles. "A fine road," said Megasthenes, "but rather dangerous in war time." "It is intended to pursue the enemy effectively, and not for his advance," said Siddharthaka. When Megasthenes crossed the *Hydaspes* and his chariot passed Boukephala, Siddharthaka pointed out to him the place where Alexander's Durbar was held. The Greek envoy watched with interest those scenes of Alexander's exploits, but was grieved to hear that all the Greek colonists had left Nikaia and Boukephala. At Rajagiri on the *Hyphasis* he had a look at Alexander's altars, which were still kept intact, though converted into Hindu places of worship, where even the Mauryan Princes used to worship when passing that way. "A good idea, this combination of Greek and Indian symbols of worship," said Megasthenes. "After all, the gods are the same, it is the worshippers who differ. I hope they too will soon like each other better."

They proceeded to Indraprastha on the *Jumna*, and then to Hastinapura on the *Ganges*. Siddharthaka tried to explain the historical importance of those places. As Megasthenes saw no monuments on the ground either very

remarkable or ancient, he was not very much interested in the accounts of these two cities. The next big town passed was Radhapura[3]. Then, they went to Kanyakubja, and thence to Prayag at the confluence of the *Jumna* and *Ganges*, and thence to Benares. Siddharthaka did not tell Megasthenes about these towns as he thought he would not be interested in them also. Finally they reached Pataliputra on the 66th day after starting from Takshasila. During the whole journey Megasthenes had been very much interested in the rice and millet crops in the adjoining fields, and in the variety of fruits and bulbous roots, and the flexibility of the branches of trees, and generally in the great fertility of the Gangetic regions. The many tributaries of the *Ganges*, like the *Jumna*, the *Gomti*, the *Gogra* and the *Gandaki*, each a mighty river by itself, and the lakes formed in many places pleased him greatly. At Benares the river was in floods, and was three miles broad. The people west of the *Ganges* were being referred to as *Gangaputras*[4] by Siddharthaka. Megasthenes found the Indians tall, thin and agile, and distinguished by their proud bearing. They were fond of living in their villages, instead of in great undisciplined multitudes. Most of them were illiterate, but had a great attachment to truth and virtue. They respected their word, and made deposits of gold and valuables orally, without any writing to witness them. They were generally frugal in their habits, but were fond of finery and ornament. The robes of the well-to-do, and especially of the ladies, were worked in gold and ornamented with precious stones. They also wore flowered garments made of the finest muslin. Attendants walking

3. The Rhodopha of the Greeks.

4. 'Gangaridae' of Megasthenes.

behind were holding umbrellas over them. They had a high regard for beauty, and were availing themselves of every device to improve their looks. Houses and property were generally left unguarded, but were safe from thieves. The laws were those handed down through the ages, and were attested to by Brahmins who recited them from memory[5]. He did not find slaves, and was told that Indians did not like the institution of slavery, because they were convinced that the best life was that of a man who never cringed to a master, or domineered over a slave. The tombs were very plain, and many tribes burnt the dead bodies and reared no monuments to the dead at all, considering the memory of their virtuous acts done when alive to be sufficient. The staple food of the people was rice and curry. The lower classes drank rice arrack, but the higher classes did not drink it. Siddharthaka told Megasthenes that they drank wine only when performing sacrifices. Megasthenes was pleased at all this. But he found that people were taking meals in private, each by himself, and that the hours of meals were all irregular, each one taking it when he liked. He considered this curious, and told Siddharthaka that common meals at fixed times would make for better social and civic life. Siddharthaka told him that it would be considered a great infringement of the liberties of the people and the laws of the Indians, who would rise in revolt against any such imposition.

When they reached Pataliputra, Megasthenes was conducted by Siddharthaka to the palatial State Guest-House, and he was given all comforts.

The next morning was the great festival of *Deepavali*, when the Emperor would bathe and wash his hair at a public levee of the nobles and high officers and foreign

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5. The Smritis, or law-books, like those of Manu.

Ambassadors, and would receive costly presents from the feudatory Princes. Megasthenes was purposely taken by Siddharthaka to Pataliputra on the eve of this great annual ceremony, so that he might be presented to the Emperor on that auspicious occasion. The next morning, at six o'clock, Megasthenes was woken up and taken to the levee. He found the Emperor seated in the middle of the feudatory Princes, nobles, ministers and officials and a vast concourse of people all bathed and wearing new robes. He was being bathed, and his hair washed with *Ganges* water. After this was over, the Princes and nobles gave their presents, and received return presents from the Emperor. Megasthenes too went and gave the gifts sent by Seleukos; Chandragupta received them graciously, gave in return two gold bowls inlaid with emeralds, and containing some aphrodisiacs of rare virtue asked for by Seleukos, and made many polite inquiries about Seleukos and the other Greek monarchs of Macedon, Epirus, Egypt, and Cyrene. He then asked Rajasena and the Dubash[6] Katyayana to accompany Siddharthaka, and show Megasthenes round the Palace and town. The King then went to the 'Hall of Justice,' to hear the petitioners and the reserved cases.

Megasthenes was taken round the Palace, and was greatly impressed with its beauty and splendour. He saw a great sacrifice being performed in one corner by a Brahmin priest, and was surprised to see that the animal was not stabbed, as in Greece, but suffocated to death. He asked Katyayana, why this was so. "So that nothing mutilated may reach the deity," replied Katyayana.

Megasthenes had a peep into the 'Hall of Justice,' and saw Chandragupta still patiently hearing the cases.

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6. *Dwibhashi*.—A man who knows two or more languages, and so acts as an interpreter.

Four men were rubbing him with cylinders of wood. "Why doesn't the King retire to his private room for this massage?" he asked Katyayana. "That will simply be a waste of time when this could be done even when hearing cases," was the reply. "Does he not have a nap at this time, the hottest part of the day?" he asked. "Never does the King sleep during the day," said Katyayana.

Megasthenes was shown eight rooms in differnt parts of the Palace as Chandragupta's bedrooms. "Why so many bedrooms?" he asked. "He changes his bedroom every day in order to defeat plots against his life," replied Katyayana. "Why has he female door-keepers and a female guard and female servants?" asked he. "Because the queens may be with him, and it is therefore considered better to have female servants and guards," said Katyayana.

Megasthenes was shown a room in which there were some flasks of wine and some cups. "Does the King like wines?" he asked. "Oh no. He just drinks a little now and then, especially when some joyous event happens, or when an honoured guest is invited to a banquet. Our Kings never drink much. To get drunk is considered disgraceful. Indeed, the female aide-de-camp is expected to see that the King does not get drunk. Once a drunken King was killed by his Kshatriya female aide-de-camp for getting drunk and making improper proposals to her, and thereby disgracing his throne and country. The next King not only did not punish her but married her, seeing the sound principles she had," said Katyayana.

Then, Megasthenes was taken for an interview with Queen Devabhranta, whom he knew from childhood and had been treating like his daughter. He had an interesting conversation with her in Greek. Rajasena, Siddharthaka and Katyayana stood out of hearing distance, out of politeness.

"How does Your Majesty get on here?" asked Megasthenes, after being seated on a cushion opposite the Queen, who was attended by three ladies-in-waiting. "Very well," said the Queen. "Are the other Queens very friendly?" "Oh, Yes," she replied. "They are such dears, terribly afraid of hurting me, or giving me offence. Santavati is the model of what a high-born Princess should be. Oh, such a self-sacrificing woman! She is the Senior Queen, but never takes food unless Durdhara and I are served first. She has no child, though she would like to have one. She has spoilt Bindusara by her caressing. Ever since he was born, he has been more with her than with his own mother Durdhara." "He is a fine young Prince. I met him at Takshasila," said Megasthenes. "What is more, he seems to like our figs and wine very much, and knows more Greek than Chandragupta." "Give the credit to me," said Devabhranta. "He is a darling. I have taken to him as if he were my own son." "What kind of lady is his mother?" asked Megasthenes. "High-born, I believe hers is the noblest family in India, gentle, kind, but easily upset, and living in mortal fear that something may happen to Bindusara at any time. She is a very interesting woman. Hers is undoubtedly a loving nature." "What about the King?" "Oh, he is a great man. I consider him far greater than my own father." "Naturally." "Oh, no, not because he is my husband. He is a combination of skill, judgment and consideration, action and contemplation. He appears to all people to be a man of action, but I believe that his real inclination is for contemplation. He has many luxuries here, but feels happier on a mud floor talking to the Brahmins. He loves us, his Queens, and loves his son and subjects dearly, but I am afraid he loves several stone-idols far more. I found him shedding tears

of joy over a little *Sivalingam*[7] one day. He has never done it over any of us. He was so absorbed in it that he didn't even see me. Durdhara came in, and prostrated to him and to the little stone. Santavati has never forgiven me for not having called her in to witness what she calls 'a sublime scene.' I told her in tun, 'He may one day desert us all and become a naked *Sannyasi* like Dandiswami and Kalanos.' Instead of getting apprehensive, she said with evident respect and approbation, 'His is really a religious nature. He is born like that.' I believe she admired him all the more for it."

"Don't you want to visit Greece again?" asked Megasthenes. "Yes, just to see old faces and places. But I have turned native in India. India, this land of eternal mystery, has caught and tamed me. I love a plantain leaf now more than a Greek vase, a mango more than a fig, cocoanut-oil more than olive-oil, Chandragupta more than Seleukos, heat more than cold, the cow more than the horse, the peacock more than the hen, the *kokil* more than the nightingale, the Himalayas more than Olympus, Pataliputra more than my native town," said she, and shed tears. "Diophantes!" said Megasthenes, a tear glistening in his eye, "Are you lost to Hellas?" "Yes. I am no longer Diophantes! I am *Devabhranta*," said she, wiping off her tears. "The moment you see the isles of Greece, their fascination will grip you again," said Megasthenes. "Just for a moment, perhaps. Then I should again pine for the plains of Ind," said Devabhranta. "Tell me more about this country," said Megasthenes. "I am writing a book about it." "Katyayana will be a far better person for that. He knows Greek and the

7. A small stone-idol of Siva.

languages of India very well, and his fund of information on all kinds of topics, however uncommon, is amazing. I shall order him to come to the Guest-house and answer all your questions." Calling Katyayana to her side, she ordered him to go to Megasthenes and give him whatever information he wanted. "Your Majesty, I shall be delighted to do so," said Katyayana. "I shall tell him whatever I know. I shall find out and tell him about things I do not know." "Excellent," said Devabhranta.

Then Siddharthaka, Rajasena and Katyayana took Megasthenes to the great prison. Here Megasthenes saw a man's head being rubbed with a hard brick for brutally assaulting a girl, and a man's hand being chopped off for having put out another's eye. He saw a man awaiting his death sentence for having cut off the hands of a famous sculptor. He found also two men being whipped for not having assisted in quelling a fire in their street, though they were able-bodied and were bound to help under the Municipal laws. "Who has sentenced all these men?" he asked Vijayapala, the Superintendent of the Jail. "The City Magistrates in the case of the men who did not help in putting out the fire, and the man who was being tortured with the brick; the High Court, subject to confirmation by the King, in the cases of the chopping off of the hands and the death sentence," said Vijayapala. "Is there much theft here?" asked Megasthenes. "Oh no, about two-hundred *Panas* per day in this vast town of 4,00,000 people," said Vijayapala. "That is about two-hundred drachmas," said Katyayana.

Then Megasthenes was taken to the Town Hall and Municipal Office, and was greatly interested in the six committees of five members each, looking after the industrial arts, foreigners, births and deaths, trade and commerce, old and new manufactured articles, and collection of a tax

amounting to a tenth of the sale-proceeds of all articles sold in the town. In their collective capacity they had charge of public buildings and roads, the regulation of prices and the care of markets, harbours and temples.

He was next taken to the War Office, where too he saw six committees of five each to assist the Lord High Admiral, the Superintendent of the Commissariat, the infantry, the cavalry, the chariots and the elephants. He was greatly interested in the elephants, and was told about the method of their capture. He was shown how the Mahout and the three elephant-warriors would sit on each war-elephant during a battle. He was also shown expert charioteers taking chariots with four high-mettled steeds round and round at a great pace. He learnt that all ranks in the army were paid cash wages, and that the horses, elephants, chariots and arms belonged to the State, and had to be returned when any soldier was discharged. He was also told that no private person was allowed to keep a war-elephant, or a war-horse.

Then, he was taken to the other offices in the city. There he saw the working of the markets, canals, tolls, passports, census, and weights and measures. The method of distribution of water from the canals, the measurement of the land, and the system of taxation, all greatly interested him. Late in the evening he returned to the Guest-house after a strenuous and interesting day of sight-seeing.

The next day Megasthenes went to the office of the Superintendent of Accounts. He was impressed with the army of accountants and auditors there. They were examining the imperial accounts of the last year submitted by the Collector-General. "How many days has your year?" asked Megasthenes. "Three-hundred-and-fifty-four," said the Superintendent. "When are your accounts

closed?" "On the last day of *Ashadha*[8]. We begin our examination of accounts on *Vyushta* or New-Year's Day, the first day of *Sravana*[9]." "How do you check the accounts of the provinces?" "We have travelling accountants and auditors." "How do you prevent delays?" The account and audit officer responsible is fined 200 *Panas* for every month of delay." "What salaries do you pay to your officers?" "It ranges enormously. The *Ritvik, Rajaguru, Purohita,* Minister, Commander-in-chief, Crown Prince, King's mother and Queen, are paid 48,000 *Panas* per year; the Chamberlain, Controller of the household, *Pradestri, Rajuka,* and *Sannidhatri* get 24,000 *Panas*; the Superintendents of the city, the heads of departments and Wardens of the Marches get 12,000 *Panas*; the elephant and chariot Captains 8,000; Captains of cavalry and infantry 4,000; Mahouts, chariot-drivers and others 2,000; Court-Astrologer and Bard 1,000; ordinary soldiers, accountants and clerks 500; Musicians and Actors 250; Artisans 120; and Peons and Messengers 60." "A very liberal scale, especially in the upper grades," said Megasthenes. "The King's servants must be kept above want and temptation," said the Superintendent.

For a fortnight more Megasthenes went round the various offices of Pataliputra, studying the system of administration and government. He also mixed freely with the Brahmanas and *Sramanas*. He was interested in watching the Brahmin care of the pregnant mother and growing child, and liked the life of the Brahmins who lived in a separate quarter of the city in a simple style, assembling together every evening in a grove to discourse about serious things, or to listen to wiser men. He noted with approval that they did not speak, cough or spit, or interrupt the discourse

8. About 15th August.
9. About 16th August.

in any way. Most of them, he was told, would study till they were 36, and then marry and settle down. Till then they would not eat flesh as food, or have sexual relations, and would use rushes and deer skins to lie on. After marriage they would wear fine muslin clothes and gold rings and ear-rings, and would not abstain from flesh food, though they would not eat the meat of cows or oxen, and would also avoid highly seasoned food. Death was with them a very favourite subject of discourse. He also spent some time with the *Sramanas* in the woods. Their knowledge of pharmacy pleased him. Their cures were more often effected by regulating the diet, than by the use of medicines, though they used ointments and plasters. They were some of them diviners and sorcerers, and adepts in the rites and customs relating to the dead. They purposely inculcated such superstitions regarding the tortures in hell as they considered favourable to piety and holiness of life. Thus, one taught the people that those who fouled rivers and tanks should bail out the whole water with one-eighth of a gooseberry leaf!

Megasthenes had three or four more interviews with Chandragupta. At his request, the Emperor directed Bhadrabhata to take him to an elephant-hunt near the Kalinga forests. It was an exciting journey through the country parts. But the actual hunt was still more exciting. A deep trench, some half-mile long, was dug round a bare patch of ground. A very narrow bridge led into this enclosure, wherein three well-trained female elephants were kept. Men hid in concealed huts outside the enclosure. At night ten wild elephants entered the enclosure one after the other along the bridge. When the last one had crossed into the enclosure, the bridge was removed. The ten elephants thus trapped were starved for three days, and denied even water. Then trained mahouts on fine

war-elephants went and fought the wild ones. Expert mahouts got under the bellies of the tired wild elephants, and tied their legs together. Then the wild ones and tame ones were tied together neck to neck with thongs of raw ox-hide. Cuts were made all round the necks of the wild ones, and thongs of leather put into the incisions in order to make them submit to the fetters and to remain quiet when mounted. One of the ten elephants caught was too old, and another too young. Both were let off into the forest, and the rest were taken to the State elephant-stables twenty miles away, and were there gradually tamed by being tied up to fixed pillars, by regulated starvation, and by their being taught how to obey orders. When they were tamed they were given green reeds and grass in abundance, and quickly recovered their old strength and vigour.

Megasthenes saw also diseased elephants being treated. An elephant with a wound had hot water fomentation applied to it. Then the wounds were rubbed over with butter. Pieces of pork, hot but still retaining the blood, were applied to the wound. He found cow's milk being poured into their eyes for curing eye-sores. Black wine of wood-apples was being given with chicken broth to invalid elephants.

Megasthenes returned to Pataliputra highly pleased with what he had seen. It was two months since he came to Pataliputra. He wanted to go back to Seleukos with the presents Chandragupta had given. He told Katyayana that he would take leave of Chandragupta in three days, and leave for Syria. He asked him to see him the next morning at the Guest-house at seven o'clock, and give him some general information about India. " I shall be delighted to do so," said Katyayana.

CHAPTER XXXIV

FACTS AND FABLES

KATYAYANA was at the State Guest-House that cool December morning with all kinds of assorted information. He wandered round the garden for an hour till Megasthenes should send for him. At seven, Megasthenes came into the hall. "Oh, thank you very much for coming," said he. "Now we shall go straight to our business." Then he put a number of questions, and noted them and the answers in his notebook for ready reference when writing his book "Indika."

"How big is India?" asked Megasthenes. "32,000 stadia from north to south, 28,000 from east to west," said Katyayana. "So big?" asked Megasthenes. "Yes, in the extreme south, at Cape Kumari the gnomon of the sun-dial often casts no shadow, the *Great Bear* is invisible at night, and shadows fall to the south." "Are there many other mountains besides the Hemodos[1] and the Kaukosos?"[2] "Oh, yes. There are many huge mountains with an enormous number of timber and fruit trees of different kinds." "Do you have famine now and then?" "Never has famine visited this country.

1. The Himalayas.
2. The Hindukush.

There has never been a general scarcity in the supply of nourishing food," said Katyayana. "That is wonderful," said Megasthenes. "How are you able to escape famine altogether? How many crops are grown, and what are they?" "Two crops per year, the winter crop and summer crop. Rice, millet, wheat, pulse, bosporum, sugarcane, plantains, sesamum and many kinds of roots, besides cotton, hemp, and jute." "What is sugarcane?" "It is a tall reed from which we extract sugar," said Katyayana. "How is it possible to grow two crops every year?" "We get two monsoons, and there are also facilities for irrigation." "Has there ever been failure of rains, or devastation of crops, in this land?" "Never." "What happens when wars are waged?" "Kings and their soldiers fight. The farmers and traders carry on their business as usual, as neither party will molest them. Both parties realise that everything depends on cultivation, and so leave it alone."

"Has your land been ever conquered?" "Never. Even Alexander gave up all idea of invading it, when he heard that we had 4,000 trained war-elephants." Have you invaded and conquered any other country?" "Never." "What are the boundaries of India?" "The *Indus*, the *Ganges* and the ocean." "Who are your neighbours?" "The Persians, the Skythians and the Bactrians." "Are all the Indians of one race?" "Oh, no. We have innumerable races. But all these are indigenous to our country. Nobody has colonised any part of India. Nor have Indians colonised any part of the world." "What are your Gods?" "We have our Dionysius[3], who ruled in a city in the far west[4], and captured the whole of India

3. Krishna.

4. Dwaraka.

with his songs and dances. He taught our people the laws[5]. His descendants are still rulers of many kingdoms, our Emperor being one. We have also our Herakles[6], who wears a lion's skin and carries a club. He cleared the sea and land of demons and evil beasts. He married one wife in the Himalayas, another at Benares, a third at Kanchi, and a fourth at Madura in the far south[7]. He was also the original founder of Pataliputra. He had two sons. He had a daughter by Meenakshi, and he made her the Queen of the Pandya country, and gave her an inexhaustible supply of the most lustrous pearls, the envy of the world."

"Have you seven castes as in Egypt?" "What are the seven castes in Egypt?" asked Katyayana. "Philosophers who offer sacrifices, perform the obsequies of the dead and fortell rains, winds, diseases etc; husbandmen: shepherds and cowherds; artisans; soldiers; spies and overseers; and councillors and assessors," said Megasthenes. "Yes, we too have them," replied Katyayana. "Can people marry outside their caste?" "No." "Which are your largest rivers?" "The *Indus* and the *Ganges*. But there is a wonderful river in the Hemados by name *Sila*[8], where nothing floats but everything goes straight to the bottom." "Wonderful! Is it possible to see it easily?" "No. It takes a year to reach it, and only Sages go there." "How long does an elephant live?" "As long as the longest lived man, and even longer. I have heard that an elephant lived up to two-hundred years." "Which is the centre of India?" "The land of the Mundas and

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5. The *Gita*.
6. Siva.
7. Parvati, Visalakshi, Kamakshi and Meenakshi.
8. Means 'stone'

Savaras[9] where, on Mount Malaya[10], the shadows fall towards the north in winter, and towards the south in summer for six months alternately." "Tell me what cotton is." "It is a kind of wool which grows on trees every year as ordinary wool does on sheep."

"What are the interesting animals in this country besides the elephant?" "The monkey, the tiger, the rhinoceros, the peacock, the crocodile, the python, the king-cobra and the scorpion." "Where are the biggest tigers to be found?" "Here, among the Prachyas[11]. Have you not seen them?" asked Katyayana. "Yes, yesterday I saw at the park a tame tiger, nearly twice the size of a lion, led by four men, seizing a mule by the hind leg and dragging it to itself. Are the monkeys malicious?" asked Megasthenes. "No. They do not attack man, or steal things." "What about the scorpions?" "They are very troublesome. Some are very long, and some are winged." "Winged!" "Yes. Even some serpents are winged. They are only two cubits long, and fly about at nights. If their secretions fall on people, blisters and itches are caused." "Are there very big serpents?" "There are serpents bigger than trees. They live in forests, and swallow even cattle."

"What other interesting animals are there?" "There are the electric eel, the gold-digging ant, and the monkey which rolls down stones." "How big are these gold-digging ants?" "Of the size of wild foxes." "Are they of gentle disposition?" "No; on the contrary, they are very fierce. This is natural, seeing that people want to steal their gold." "Are there any more strange animals?" "There

9. In Ganjam and Vizagapatam.

10. Mahendragiri in the Eastern ghats.

11. The people of Magadha and Bengal.

are white elephants." "White elephants!" exclaimed Megasthenes. "Yes, but very rare. A man caught one recently on the borders of Kalinga. Our King wanted it and sent his men to him, offering him a great reward. The man would not part with it. Then the King sent a Captain with some troops to fetch it. The owner was wounded, and rolled down from the elephant's back. But the elephant picked him up, put him on its back, and bolted into the dense forest and escaped." "Oh, how faithful are elephants, and how faithless is man!" exclaimed Megasthenes. "The island of Taprobane, or Simhala, has many fine elephants, with pearls inside their tusks," said Katyayana. "Pearls inside tusks! Elephants producing pearls!" exclaimed Megasthenes. "When slimy oysters can produce pearls, why not lordly elephants, sir?" asked Katyayana.

"Tell me something about the wonderful birds," said Megasthenes. "We have parrots of three varieties," replied Katyayana. "They cannot talk when wild, but can be taught to speak like us. You must have noticed them at the Palace. Then we have the *kokil*, which pines away in captivity, but sings wonderfully when with its mate. Our hoopoe is very beautiful, and is admired even by Kings. There is a myth about it. It was once born as the youngest prince in an Indian royal house. The elder brothers disdained the youngster, and treated their old parents with contempt. The young man, unable to bear such open slighting of his parents, set out with them for a new home. The old parents died on the way, in a desert, after a long journey. Most unwilling to bury them in that unholy spot, the prince took a sword, cut off his own head and buried his parents in his own body! The sun-god, in great admiration for this act of filial piety, changed him into this wonderful bird with the beautiful crest." "Is there a myth about the river *Sila* also?"

asked Megasthenes. "Yes. It was once a hard-hearted usurer charging 300% interest. All people who had dealings with him were ruined, and died heart-broken. He ruined so many people that the moon-god made him the river *Sila*, in which anything put will at once turn into stone and sink. Ever since then, such usury is unknown here," replied Katyayana. "Your land is a great one for fables and myths. But how to separate the true facts from these encrusting legends ?" asked Megasthenes. "We never worry about it. Where is the time in this fleeting life ? Where is the need too ? The myths are known to thousands, the facts but to few, and so the myths are in a sense more real than the facts," said Katyayana.

"Well, conclude your account of the other wonderful animals," said Megasthenes. "We have the ant-eater which has got such rough scales on the skin, that the animal is flayed and the scales used as files for cutting through brass and iron. There are herds of wild mares in the *Aranya* country[12], which consort with asses and give birth to mules, which are caught young and brought to our King for drawing carts during war time. They are caught with foot-traps. There are yaks which give fine yak-tails, peacocks which give the peacock fans, whales sixty feet long, sea-wolves, sea-hares, sea-snakes, and tortoises, the shells of some of which can contain a hundred-and-twenty gallons of water. There is in the Malava country a cavern 3,000 feet deep, where people throw an animal as a sacrifice to save themselves from death, illness or other calamity predicted for them. Thirty-thousand horses, oxen, goats, pigs, and other animals are being hurled into the abyss every year. You cannot see the animals at the bottom, but you can

12. The Runn of Cutch.

hear their plaintive cries, the bellowing of the oxen, the neighing of the horses, the bleating of the goats, and the grunting of the pigs." "Do the men thereby free themselves from the predicted evils?" "They think so, but who can be certain about it?"

"Are there any peculiar races in your country differing from other men?" "Oh yes, there are the Kiratas[13], who are only 45 inches tall, some being only 27 inches, and who are noseless. Then, there are some whose ears are made to hang so loose that they sleep on them, as on a mat, and even cover themselves with them. There are beings with their heels in front and toes inwards. The King wanted two of these to be caught and brought to him. They were caught all right, but refused to take food and died, and so could not be brought to the King. There are men who live merely by smelling food. There are some who cover their mouths always, lest they should inhale and destroy any living being. They revolt at the smell of meat being cooked. They are called 'mouthless.' There are, in this country, men with only a single eye in the middle of their foreheads." "We have also such men in our legends, the cyclopes," said Megasthenes. "We call them '*Lalataksha*.' Then, we have men whose hair stands out on their head like spikes. We have men too who live for a thousand years." "We too have such people. We call them Hyperboreans," said Megasthenes. "We call them *Uttarakurus*," said Katyayana. "With *Kayakalpa*[14] treatment, others live up to a thousand years. We have wonderful aphrodisiacs, which will make a man of hundred as young as a man of thirty." "Your King has given some of them to me to be given to

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13. A mythical race said to inhabit the Himalayan valleys.

14. A much-advertised rejuvenation method in India.

Seleukos," said Megasthenes. "Has your country always had a King?" "No. We have had Republics thrice, once for 300 years, once for 120 years, and once for 100 years. But, generally we have had Kings. The present King is descended from our Dionysius, and is 153rd in descent from him, and a period of 6,042 years has passed since this dynasty began." "An enormous time, and what a long line of kings!" "That is nothing wonderful. In the Pandya country, women give birth to children at the age of nine." "Nine!" exclaimed Megasthenes. "Yes, nine. Fruits ripen there earlier. Men and women too mature earlier. Men in the Pandya country get grey-haired when they are mere boys, and die generally at forty." "And among you?" "Say, sixty."

"Are there slaves among you?" "Oh, no; no Arya can be a slave." "Do you lend or borrow money?" "No. Our principle is, don't lend or borrow!" "Do you go to court to recover deposits?" "No. We blame ourselves for trusting rogues." "Are women allowed to be philosophers?" "Yes, but they must then observe a vow of continence like the men." "Are the men or the women more numerous among you?" "They are about equal. Our philosophers, the *Sramanas*, can not only make marriage fruitful, but can also determine the sex of the offspring. They effect the cures of diseases, sometimes by ointments, plasters, lotions, potions and powders, but more often by regulating the diet." "Yes, I was also among them for some time, and saw it," said Megasthenes. "Now, to some other points. What are the principal countries and races in India? Give me a brief description with the saliant details." "There are 118 of them. Almost all of them are under our Emperor's overlordship. The Asvakas with Massaka as their capital; the Takshas of Takshasila; the Kashmiris; the Aratti; the Yaudheyas; the Abhiras; the Sauraseni with the great

cities of Muttra and Kalindipura, or Kalikapura[15], sacred to our Dionysius; the Sakas; the Kiratas; the Prachyas and the Gangaputras with 6,00,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry, 6,000 chariots and 9,000 elephants and with Pataliputra as Capital and hundreds of other big cities; the Uttara Kalingas with Parthalis as their Capital and with 60,000 infantry, 1,000 cavalry and 700 elephants ever ready for war; the King of Tamralipti with 50,000 infantry, 4,000 cavalry and 400 elephants; the Madhyakalingas with a powerful army and with their Capital at Dantapura; the Andhras with 1,00,000 infantry, 2,000 cavalry and 1,000 elephants and thirty towns with walls and towers, including Rajapura, Amaravati, Machilipatna, Kalyan, Pratishthana and Dhanyaketa; the tribes of Patala and other places in Sind known to you already: the Nishadhas in Paropanisadai; the Dhars and Suars of Central India; the Nari with Mount Capitalis[16], loftiest of mountains, in their midst; the Oraturas, or Rathors, with a powerful infantry but only ten elephants; the Saurashtri who are a corporation of Kshatriya warriors and keep 1,600 elephants, 1,50,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry, and have their Capital in Ashtamula[17], a great emporium for trade at the junction of five rivers, and have Pushyagupta as Governor; the Charmamandalas, the Suriyanis, Jhadejas, Kokaris, Umranis, Kokondas, etc., between the Sutlej and Kachch; the Chryse and Arakanese with gold, silver and other metals; the Pandyas, formerly ruled by a woman, and having 300 cities and an army of 1,50,000 foot and 500 elephants, rule with their Capital at Madura; the Cholas at Arkot; the Keralaputras, or Cheras, rule at Troponitra,[18]; and the

15. Brindaban.
16. Mount Arbuda or Abu.
17. Vallabhi.
18. Tiruppunattara in Cochin.

island of Taprobane[19] has 750 villages, and is 9,000 stadia long and 5,000 broad; there are innumerable others, too tedious and unimportant to mention," said Katyayana.

"Any other things of interest?" asked Megasthenes. "If you like, I can tell you some remarkable things about our philosophers." "Oh, I know all about them," said Megasthenes. "The Greeks who came along with Alexander have left full accounts of Dandiswami, Kalanos and numerous others. Indeed, I wonder whether many of you here have heard of the end of Kalanos at Sousa. I have read the account given by Nearchos, an eye-witness." "I have not heard about it. Do tell me," said Katyayana. "Well," said Megasthenes, "Kalanos had been keeping perfect health till he reached Sousa. He ate and drank to his heart's desire without the least injury to his digestion, despite all his previous ascetic habits. But, at Sousa he was afflicted with colic. He had no desire to live the life of an invalid, and to be pointed out by the Indians and others as a victim to his having taken to forbidden foods and drinks. So, he informed Alexander that he was going to put an end to himself before the malady got worse. Alexander tried very hard to dissuade him from this course, but failed. He saw that Kalanos would put an end to his life in one way or the other, and that he was inflexible in his resolution. So, he ordered Ptolemy to have a funeral pyre arranged as desired. A horse from Alexander's own stud was provided for Kalanos. But, he was unable to mount it. He was garlanded after the Indian fashion, and carried in a litter according to the Indian custom. He sang hymns in praise of the Indian gods and goddesses, as they carried him. A solemn procession of horses and armed men advaneed

19. Ceylon.

before him, some of the men carrying incense in gold and silver bowls. The steed of the royal stud provided for him by Alexander was presented by him to Lysimachos, who was his student in philosophy. The bowls and rugs ordered by Alexander to be cast into the pyre in his honour were presented by Kalanos to those who attended him. He approached the pyre, uttered a prayer, and ascended the pile after taking leave of all present. Alexander did not deem it fit that he should witness the self-immolation of his friend, and was absent. As soon as Kalanos ascended the pile, he lay down on it, covered himself with his robes, and ordered the pyre to be set fire to: He asked all the Macedonians to devote that day to pleasure and hard drinking with the King. He added, 'I shall meet the King at Babylon,' which people remembered afterwards when Alexander died at Babylon. As soon as the pyre was set fire to, Nearchos had the trumpets sounded, as ordered by Alexander, and the whole army raised the war-shout, as if advancing to battle. The elephants too swelled the noise with their shrill warlike cries to honour him. When the flames approached him, he did not move, but remained in the same posture till he was completely burnt to ashes. Alexander, on being told about Kalanos's advice, invited his friends and Generals to a supper where he proposed a drinking bout with a crown as a prize. Promachos drank 14 quarts, and won the crown, but died in three days. Forty-one of the guests died of the effects of this drinking bout following the self-immolation of Kalanos."

"Wonderful," said Katyayana. "I must tell all Indians about Kalanos's end. Now, about other interesting things. Do you know about *Sati*, the self-immolation of a widow on her husband's pyre, prevalent among some Kshatriyas?" "I know about it too," said Megasthenes,

" when Keteus, the Indian General, died in a great battle between Eumenes and Antigonos, his two widows contended for the honour of being burned on his funeral pile. The younger one was selected, as the elder, being at the time with child, was precluded by law from immolating herself." " What did the Greeks say about it ? " asked Katyayana. " Some admired the courage and loyalty involved in it. Others condemned it as suicide, and as a worse form of suicide than that of Kalanos, because *Sati* was a suicide sanctioned by custom, while that of Kalanos was the result of his individual choice. Do all of you have the custom ?" " Oh, no. Brahmins are forbidden to observe it. Even others do not observe it much in these parts. We hold that each person reaps in the other world the rewards of his or her acts in this world. As suicide is sinful and leads to Hell, the widow, by immolating herself, goes to Hell and cannot help her husband. By living on and perfoming pious ceremonies to the manes of her departed husband she may help him on to salvation." " Now, I have finished. Thank you very much for your information," said Megasthenes, closing his note-book and giving Katyayana ten gold coins. " Sir," said Katyayana returning the coins, " I cannot accept them. Our King pays us well, and will not allow us to take anything from our guests." " Well, then, thank you very much," said Megasthenes. " I wish you a safe journey back, sir," said Katyayana, and left the presence of Megasthenes.

CHAPTER XXXV

FAMINE AND PESTILENCE

HARDLY had Megasthenes left India with the fable that the country had never known famine, when the fact of famine became a terrible reality almost all over the country. The monsoons failed completely in the whole empire with the exception of Kuntala, Isila, Brahmagiri and other southern provinces of the Viceroyalty of Suvarnagiri, and famine began to rage in a most aggravated form. Crops had failed throughout North and Central India and the Maharashtra country. Almost all the wells had dried up, and there was not even enough drinking-water for men and cattle. The pasture-grounds were all burnt up by the terrible heat of the sun. At first cattle began to die in thousands for lack of fodder and water. Then, men began to die, first in ones and twos, then in scores, then in hundreds and finally in thousands. The Kumara and Aryaputra Viceroys[1], the Pradestris, Mahamatras, and Rajukas[2], the Mantriparishads[3], the

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1. The Kumaras were sons, and Aryaputras other relatives of the King.

2. These were Governors, Commissioners, and District Officials.

3. Councils of ministers at Imperial and Provincial headquarters.

Janapadas[4], the Antamahamatras[5], the Yuktas, Upayuktas and Rajapurushas[6], the Nagarakas, the Sthanikas,[7] the Gopas[8] and other officials of the empire were all directed by the Emperor's personal edict to do their very best to bring the famine under control and work with all their might. They did their best, but all to little effect. There seemed to be a limit to what mere men could do against the terrific destructive forces of Nature. The year 299 B. C. was one of the blackest years in India.

The whole famine area was filled with the dead and the dying. To add to the horrors of the famine, a terrible epidemic of cholera had broken out in all the famine-areas, owing to the starving people having eaten all kinds of unhealthy food and drunk all kinds of dirty and infected water. The cholera had started at first in four centres, namely, at Indraprasta on the *Jumna*, Hastinapura on the *Ganges*, Ujjaini in the Malava country and Pataliputra itself. Thousands died, and the corpses were thrown into the rivers, unburnt, by the ignorant people. All the river-side towns down to Tamralipti at the mouth of the *Ganges* were soon infected with cholera. Owing to the vast migrations of the people from place to place in search of food and water, the cholera spread to places like Viratapura, Vanakousambi, Pratishthana, Dhanyaketa, Bharukachchha, Surat, and other towns of the empire. The villages in between were also devastated.

The efforts of the people to get rid of the disease by following the time-honoured methods, namely, by

4. Assemblies of the people at Imperial and Provincial headquarters.

5. The Wardens of the Marches.

6. The Subordinate Civil Service.

7. Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners of Towns.

8. Village and regional officials and accountants.

oblations to the great demon Tantukachchha and to the Cholera Goddess, by milking cows on cremation-grounds, by burning the trunks of all corpses even in cases where they would be normally buried, and by spending nights in continuous prayer, were of no avail. Fifty-millions were suffering from acute famine and pestilence, and were beiag decimated by these fell disasters. Children were being abandoned in hundreds by their destitute parents. Thousands were also sold away as slaves by the poorer classes. Many men and women entered into an indentured labour system, which was nothing short of serfdom, in order to get at least something to eat and drink. In the middle of this Dance of Death and suffering, Bhadra-bahusvamin, the great Jain teacher and Srutakevalin, began preaching his soul-stirring sermons in the great cities of the north. He began at Vaisali, and went on preaching at Pataliputra, Prayag, Benares, and Ujjain with ever-increasing numbers following him. His main theme was that the famine was the result of the bad *Karma* of the people in the past and of their indulgence in violence, cruelty and their killing of their fellow-creatures. He attributed their sufferings to their ignoring the teachings of the Arhats and Kevalins in general, and of Mahavira and Parsvanatha in particular. He advised a great migration to Mahishamandala province in the far south, where there was no famine. Another argument used by him was that the famine was making it very difficult for people to practise the normal virtues. " Charity is sapped by having nothing to give. Avarice has increased tenfold with the desire to eat and drink something, somehow. Liberality towards one's relatives and friends has disappeared. Callousness towards sufferings has set in. The ancient Arya Dharma is perishing. Let us go to the south where the material conditions are better, and preserve and spread our Arya Dharma," said he.

He sent an appeal to the Emperor too to abdicate and follow him. Chandragupta had been greatly attracted by the sermons. The appeal too was not without its fascination, but, after consultation with Chanakya, he finally rejected it. "After careful and deep searching of heart, I have decided that I should not abdicate and follow your Holiness," he wrote. "My son is not yet fit to be entrusted with the government of the country, and this is not the time to hand the Empire over to him. My preceptor, the venerable Chanakya, and I have resolved to pray to God and to fight the famine and pestilence instead of running away from them, and seeking peace and safety for ourselves. We feel that to run away now from our subjects will be like deserting our armies in the middle of a great battle. A king's *Dharma* is, I am convinced, to stand by his subjects in weal and woe. While a petty monarch might arrange a migration to another kingdom with all his subjects in the event of a great famine, a king with a vast empire and millions of subjects like me cannot dream of it. Hence, I must, with sorrow, decline to follow your Holiness's advice. I am, however, sending five-hundred bullock-waggons from the army for aiding this migration, and am also writing to the Viceroy of Suvarnagiri to render your Holiness all possible help."

Rajavaisya Pushyagupta's son Chandragupta had been appointed Viceroy of Ujjain, when Bindusara had been appointed Viceroy of Takshasila. That brilliant young man was won over by Bhadrabahu's preaching, renounced his high office, became a Jain and followed the great teacher to the South along with twenty-five-thousand others. The Emperor was sorry to lose him, but did nothing to prevent him from going away. Lohitaksha was made the Viceroy of Ujjain in his stead.

Then the Emperor and Chanakya took drastic measures for combating the famine and pestilence. The incipient food-riots and lootings, which had begun in Pataliputra and the cities, were nipped in the bud by an imperial edict compelling all the merchants to sell their entire stock of grain to the State granaries at reasonable prices, and by the State selling it at the same rate to the rich, and doling out the necessary minimum quantities free to the poor and starving. One big merchant, Dhanakirti, had fifty-thousand bags of paddy, but swore before the Magistrates that he had but a thousand bags. Chandragupta ordered the thousand bags to be paid for, and directed Dingarata to bring the other 49,000 bags of paddy in Dhanakirti's shop to the State granaries without payment. This had an electric effect. All other merchants quickly gave supplemental returns of their stocks, and there was enough grain to last for a year for the whole empire and provide for seeds.

The Emperor and Chanakya sent Samudranatha with 1,000 State ships and 1,000 commandeered private ships and ten-million gold *Panas* taken from the Nanda hoard to the Chola, Pandya, Keralaputra and Simhala countries to buy and bring all the paddy he could get. In six months he returned with 40,00,000 bags of paddy in his 2,000 ships and 2,000 ships of the Southern countries. He also brought the cheering news that the Kings of Pandya, Chola, Keralaputra and Simhala had refused to take money for the 10,00,000 bags given by the State granaries as that would be opposed to their motto of "Charity is our household Divinity." The Emperor and Chanakya were so pleased with it that they at once directed Purushadatta, the Viceroy of Suvarnagiri, to withdraw his regiments from the Podiyil hills and the occupied portions of the Pandya and Chola countries into

the Kuntala and Mahishamandala Provinces, and to present each one of the Southern independent kingdoms with a hundred golden-wheeled chariots, so much coveted by them, and to assure them that there would be in future no war between them.

Chandrabhanu was directed to use his 60,000 bullock-waggons belonging to the army for transporting grain to the famine areas. Rakshasa asked Chanakya whether it would be wise to use the entire army transport for fighting the famine, lest some enemy should attack them, taking advantage of the opportunity. "Which enemy is there capable of attacking us now? Seleukos and the Rulers of the Southern States are our friends. The Kiratas and Kambhojas of the north are too weak to dream of attacking us by themselves. If anybody is foolish enough to attack us now, every citizen will become a soldier and hack the invaders to pieces, if they do not die of the famine and cholera," replied Chanakya.

The Emperor and Chanakya directed the river-canals to be repaired and deepened, and bunds to be put up across small streams for feeding the canals. Farmers were ordered to cultivate river-side lands only with food-crops, and not with cotton, jute, etc., till the famine was over. Minor migrations from the worst famine areas to better areas near the rivers with a perennial supply of water like the *Indus*, *Ganges* and *Jumna* were encouraged. Tank-beds were allowed to be temporarily cultivated with vegetables and roots. Doctors were mobilized, and deputed to attend on the sick on pain of being punished. The throwing of unburnt corpses into the rivers was forbidden. All Government servants were directed to see that their relatives burnt the corpses within twenty-four hours of death, or to get them burnt themselves and levy the expenses from the relatives. A hundred-thousand soldiers were made to

cross-bund the *Sona*, and to replenish with water the dry ditches round the Capital. This had a magic effect in restoring confidence in the City.

The Emperor and Chanakya also ordered the opening of rescue-homes for abandoned children, and free kitchens and relief-works like repairing old forts, buildings and tanks and constructing new forts, roads, tanks and buildings. All the above measures slowly infused confidence into the people.

Chanakya organised, in addition, a great Prayer for rain by ten-thousand Brahmins to Indra, Varuna, Agni, the Asvins, Jayanta, the Rivers and the Mountains. " Sir," asked Siddharthaka : " Will these ceremonies be of much use ? " " Surely," said Chanakya. " If there is God, He must be amenable to prayers for the benefit of the people in general. Rain is the gift of the gods in return for prayers and sacrifices. I am sure God will hear us and grant us rain, if we pray long enough." For six months more the famine raged, but the deaths were much less owing to the measures adopted by Chanakya, and the enormous quantities of grain brought by Samudranatha and distributed by Chandrabhanu.

The Brahmins went on praying till one day in September 298 B. C. the welcome clouds gathered, and the sky opened out, and the earth was deluged with rain after a complete drought of 18 months. There were floods in several parts of the country, but Chandragupta and Chanakya had foreseen this, and got ready boats and other necessary equipment for fighting the floods. So, the floods did no more havoc than wash off a few thousand trees and submerge a few hundred-thousand acres. After they had subsided, there were rice-crops on the fields, and the country looked as if it had never seen famine, flood or pestilence.

INDIA IN 300 B. C.

CHAPTER XXXVI

A PROSPEROUS EMPIRE

THE famine was over. There were bumper crops everywhere. All the scars of famine, flood and pestilence had been wiped out. The whole Empire was enjoying peace and prosperity.

The Emperor resolved to go on a pious tour to rsligious places as a kind of thanksgiving. He was accompanied by his Queens, and Chanakya and the Purohita. They started in February 297 B.C. They first went to Benares, bathed in the Manikarnika and Dasasvamedha Ghats of the *Ganges*, and worshipped in the Viswanath temple. At Harischandra Ghat several corpses were burning. The ashes and bones were being thrown into the *Ganges*. "We must stop this throwing of the ashes and the bones into the sacred *Ganges*," said Chandragupta. "No," said Chanakya. "It is this throwing of the bones and ashes which makes the *Ganges* so sacred to the Hindus, by connecting their past with the present and the future. Stop throwing cholera corpses unburnt into the river, if you will, but don't stop the throwing of the ashes and bones." "Why is this great sacred city on the *Ganges* called by the names of the *Varana* and the *Asi*,* two obscure streams, instead of being called after the *Ganges*?" asked

* வாரணை + அஸி = வாராணஸி.

Chandragupta. "It is just like a great man honouring his small guests. The *Ganges* is honouring the *Varana* and the *Asi*, its small guests," said Chanakya.

Then, the party went to Prayag, and bathed at the Triveni, the junction of the visible *Ganges* and *Yamuna* and the invisible *Saraswati*. "Why is this invisible river still added on?" asked Chandragupta. "Because the visible will not be complete without the invisible," said Chanakya.

When they went to Haridwar and bathed at the Daksha-Prajapati Ghat, Chandragupta asked Chanakya, "Why was Prajapati destroyed like that?" "Because he considered rituals more important than faith, and cultivated the worst of all sins, spiritual arrogance. He opposed material welfare to spiritual values, and got smashed. Even his own daughter deserted him. Let all materialists take a lesson from his fate. God does not need our wealth or invitation, but we may ourselves lose our peace of mind and life itself in the pursuit of such soul-less materialism. There comes a stage when life rots like a rotten tree, and peters out with nobody regretting our loss," said Chanakya. "Why is the place where the *Ganges*, sacred to Siva, debouches into the plains from the eternal snows, called *Haridwar*, after Vishnu?" "Just to show that Siva and Vishnu are connected together. You found the same thing in Amarnath, which is reached by the *Seshnag* glacier and river named after Vishnu. Take again the famous temple of Rameswaram in the far south." "Oh, how I wish we could go there!" said Chandragupta. "I long to go and worship there, after the description of the place by Samudranatha." "Well, one day, we may go there, and I may myself show you round," said Chanakya.

Devabhranta said to Chandragupta, "Let us push on to Lakshmanjhola, where the rope-bridge across the sacred stream is said to be a test of faith. Anyhow, it is a test of courage." After some days of travelling in the midst of exquisite mountain scenery, they reached the head waters of the *Alaknanda*, across which the rope-bridge at Lakshmanjhola was thrown. The river at this point ran through a deep gorge, and the rope-bridge was more than 360 feet above the level of the swirling water below. The popular belief was that only he who had the unquestioning faith of a Lakshmana in God, could cross it safely. Chandragupta and Devabhranta wanted to cross it; Santavati, Durdhara and Chanakya tried to dissuade them, but in vain. "Won't you try it?" asked Chandragupta of Chanakya. "Alas," said Chanakya, "I am too full of doubts and fears, schemes and plans, to cross it. My wife might have been able to cross it, owing to her simple and unquestioning faith. I would certainly dissuade you two also." "We won't be dissuaded," said Chandragupta and Devabhranta. "Then I too shall come," said Santavati. "I too will join you," said Durdhara. "No, no, you should not try it," said Santavati. "You are a mother, and you should not risk it."

Chandragupta, Devabhranta and Santavati went one by one along that perilous rope-bridge. None of them showed the slightest trace of fear, though the spectators almost swooned with fright at the bending and swinging of the rope-bridge. They finally managed to go to the other bank, and return safely. "Well, how did you feel like?" asked Chanakya. "Oh, it was a wonderful experience," said Chandragupta. "A bit of an exciting adventure," said Devabhranta. "Why didn't you join us? It was not so very difficult after all." "I know my limitations only too well," said Chanakya. "A child can do what many an

adult can never do." "How did you find it?" Durdhara asked Santavati. "I could not look at the heavens above or the river below, but had to devote my whole attention on the Aryaputra, for whose safe crossing I was praying all the time," replied Santavati.

They returned to Gaya, and Chandragupta performed *Sraddha*[1] to all his ancestors. They then proceeded to Vaisali where bitter feuds had started between the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, Sudras and Panchamas among the Hindus, between the different sects of Buddhists, between the Digambara[2] and Swetambara[3] Jains, and also between the Hindus, Buddhists and Jains. This ancient Republican city had literally become torn with faction. Chandragupta took firm action. Calling the representatives of all the sects, he said, "There is room in this garden of Jambudvipa for all the trees of knowledge. But, when one tree tries to interfere with the light, air and nourishment of another it will have to be pruned, cut or removed, just as in a garden. The carpet of Jambudvipa has need for all the colours in it, and can do with several more colours. So, let every sect behave itself. The Kings of Magadha cannot tolerate fanaticism or caste persecution."

Chanakya said to them, "The Brahmins came from the mouth of God, the Kshatriyas from the arm, the Vaisyas from the thigh, the Sudras from the feet, and there are really no Panchamas[4]. The hand which feeds the mouth, shall it hurt the mouth? Shall the mouth bite the hand which feeds it? Shall the thigh, the pillar which supports the arm and mouth, hurt or be

1. A rite in honour of deceased Relatives.

2. Naked ones.

3. White-clothed ones.

4. The Hindu depressed classes.

hurt by them? Shall the feet, the foundations of the body give way or be cut off? Shall the followers of Buddha, who wanted all to be treated as brothers, fight others? Shall the adherents of Mahavira, who gave away his only cloth to the Brahmin Somadatta, quarrel with the Brahmins or with one another, seeing that their great Master was both Digambara and Swetambara?" The speeches impressed all the assembled representatives, who embraced one another and swore not to quarrel again.

Chandragupta and Chanakya then proceeded to Rampurwa, where Chandragupta set up a fine uninscribed pillar with a Bull capital. All around were railings. One side of the railings had the Buddhist *Dharmachakra* and scenes from the *Jatakas*; another had scenes from the lives of the Jain *Tirthankaras* and *Arhats*[5]; the third had scenes from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*; the fourth side was left blank. "The Bull is a symbol of Siva, the village is named after Rama, the pictures include Buddhist and Jain ones, and people may read whatever they like into the uninscribed pillar," said Chandragupta to Chanakya. "It is a fitting monument for an Emperor of Jambudvipa," said Chanakya. "Tolerance of all sects and creeds should be your policy, so that none of your subjects may complain. But you have made the policy your principle itself. Now, we shall go to *Sitakund*, and bathe in the sacred pool there."

They went to *Sitakund*, and bathed in the pool. Though it was midday, the water was cool and refreshing. "It is like Sita's love itself," said Chandragupta to Chanakya, "cool, refreshing and perennial. Can you tell me why Rama abandoned such a wife and left her, when in a delicate state of health, in a forest exposed to the

5. The perfected ones among the Jains.

attacks of wild beasts and wilder men?" "God's ways are mysterious," said Chanakya. "Some actions are ordained by Destiny and *Karma*. God himself, born as man, is subject to them; Sita's unjust imputation of dishonourable intentions to Lakshmana, the Soul of Honour and Loyalty, brought its retribution in the drunken washerman's rascally innuendo against herself. Rama obeyed the dictates of Destiny and *Karma* and abandoned Sita in a forest, true to his Coronation Oath to make any sacrifice to please even the meanest of his subjects. But, no wild beast could harm Sita. No man could harm her, whom even the demon Ravana found impossible to harm. Her sons, Lava and Kusa, had to grow up hearing the message of the forest, as they and their descendants had to rule this great country." "Did the earth really swallow Sita, and did the waters of the *Sarayu* swallow Rama?" "Yes," said Chanakya. "Sita was the incarnation of Mother Earth and returned to the earth. Rama was the incarnation of Narayana of the moving waters, and disappeared in the moving waters of the *Sarayu*." "My ancester, the Lord Krishna, was he really killed by a hunter?" asked Chandragupta. "Yes. The earth had its hour of bliss of the Lord. He had delivered his Message, and had to depart. The hunter shot at him from a hiding place, as the Lord had shot Vāli from a hiding place in his incarnation as Rama. It was all the result of the *Karma* of previous births." "Are incarnations of God too subject to *Karma*?" "Yes, just as kings are also subject to *Dharma*. *Brahma*[6], *Dharma*[7] and *Karma*[8] are common to all living beings."

6. God.

7. Righteous conduct.

8. Pre-determination by actions in previous births.

Chandragupta wanted to imitate the Kings of old, and visit *incognito* one of his villages and ascertain at first-hand what his subjects thought of him. So, he disguised himself as an ordinary citizen of Pataliputra and proceeded to Kundagrama. There he went to the village assembly-hall, and talked with the elders. Gradually he turned the talk on to Chandragupta and Chanakya. "Which of them is happier, do you think?" asked Chandragupta. "Certainly Chanakya," replied the oldest villager. "Why?" "He has only a dilapidated house and desires nothing more, and fears no assassins. Chandragupta has a big Empire which he is afraid of losing, and lives in daily fear of assassination. Besides, Chanakya depends only on himself, whereas Chandragupta depends on Chanakya, and they say that everything that depends on oneself makes for hapiness and everything that depends on another makes for sorrow." Chandragupta's face became sad. "What is your greatest ambition?" he asked, recovering himself, and intending to grant the wish if reasonable. "To see God face to face," was the reply. "I cannot grant it," said Chandragupta. "Who said you can?" asked the other. "If you were Chandragupta what would you do?" asked Chandragupta. "I should make the humblest of my subjects feel that I feel one with him in his joys and sorrows" replied the man. "Our Kings have sadly neglected the masses. The common man is fleeced, oppressed and then neglected by every King. That is why he is indifferent as to who rules him, and the proverb, 'What does it matter whether Rama rules us, or, Ravana rules us,' has come into vogue. Let the common man only feel that he is the State, that day real *Ram-Rajya* will come, and he will live and die for it." "What position should you give to a King in such a commonwealth?" "He will be the key-stone of the

arch, and will keep the arch of the State intact, while not caring to enjoy more than the meanest of his subjects." "Perhaps too great an ideal to expect Kings to follow," said Chandragupta. "Well, either Kings have to follow that ideal and make it a success, or they must give way to Republics like those of the Sakyas and Malavas, where we are told that every one was rich and happy." Then Chandragupta took leave of the elders, and returned to *Sitakund*, a sadder and wiser man.

The pilgrimage being over, the party returned to Pataliputra, and had three days' feasting and entertainment and distribution of prizes to those who had done yeoman work during the famine. A hundred-thousand people were sumptuously fed every morning with food from the King's own kitchen. Then, at noon, there were elephant-fights, wrestling, archery-contests, jugglery-shows and bullock-cart races. In the afternoon there were dances by Virasena, the Palace dancing-girl, and her troupe, and also puppet-shows and exhibitions of images of gods. There were recitations from the *Vedas* in the evenings. At night three famous Plays of Bhasa were staged under his own direction. The first night it was *Pratima-Nataka*. The next night it was *Svapnavasavadatta*. The third night it was *Charudatta*. All the plays were highly admired. Chandragupta gave Bhasa a pair of gold-bangles, and a village in perpetuity; he also made him Court-Poet with an allowance of two-thousand *Panas* per year, with permission to have his Plays acted in any part of the Empire, without taking out a licence every time as was required of others.

So popular were these Plays that the Representative of the King of Keralaputra asked for and obtained permission to prepare copies of the Plays and transmit them to his master. "Will they understand these Plays there?" asked

Chandragupta. "They will not only understand them, Your Majesty, but a day may come when they may teach even the people of Magadha the beauty of these Plays when they have forgotten them," replied the Ambassador. "Why don't you also ask for permission to take a copy of the *Arthasastra*?" asked Chandragupta. "I have already sent it," said the Ambassador. "The venerable Chanakya obliged me with a copy for the King of his own Keralaputra." Chandragupta smiled and said: "So the venerable Chanakya has still a partiality for Keralaputra?" "So long as it does not oppose Vrishala," said Chanakya. "Then there is nothing to fear. The Empire will continue to be prosperous under our preceptor's guidance," said Chandragupta. "What have we to fear so long as Chandragupta and Chanakya rule our destinies?" asked Rakshasa. Then he called out lustily "Long live the Emperor Chandragupta! Long live Acharya Chanakya!" The huge concourse took up the words, repeated them lustily over and over again, and dispersed.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE KING IN HIS COURT

IT was ten in the morning one fine day in August 297 B.C. Chandragupta sat on his throne in the Hall of Justice in the 'Suganga' Palace. It was the day fixed for confirming or revising the sentences for grave crimes, reserved for the King's orders by the Magadha High Court of Judicature consisting of three Judges and three Judicial Commissioners. The Mayor, the Nagaraka[1], the four Sthanikas[2], and several nobles and citizens were also present. On the dais next to Chandragupta on the right sat the Heir-Apparent Bindusara, and next to him sat Chanakya, and next to him the *Dharmadhikarin*[3] Sankirtyayana. To the left of Chandragupta sat Subuddhisarman, and his son Khallataka who was now Minister-in-waiting and Privy Seal. The two celebrated City Magistrates nicknamed by the public Kalapasika and Dandapasika[4], because of their tendency to convict and impose severe sentences, were also on the dais. A Body-Guard of eight was standing behind

1. A City-Superintendent and Commissioner combined.
2. Superintendents of the Wards of a City.
3. The Lord Chief Justice.
4. Sure-as-time and Punishment-Net.

the King. Two attendants were fanning the King with yak-tails. Two others were rolling him with ebony-rollers. A very large crowd had assembled to see the King administer justice in person.

The Lord Chamberlain, the venerable Vaihinari, rose, and said, " His Majesty King Chandragupta, Beloved of the Gods, will now pass orders on the sentences for grave crimes passed by the High Court of Magadha during the last six months. This sitting has been unavoidably delayed owing to His Majesty's pious tour to Benares, Haridwar and other religious places. Silence, now, on pain of His Majesty's displeasure ! " There was pin-drop silence.

The Usher of the Court directed the Jail-officer to take the prisoners one after the other into the roped enclosure which served as a Bar, and to take them away as soon as the orders were passed.

The first to be brought was a man of thirty, with furtive eyes. Khallataka read from his Summary of Cases, " The man before Your Majesty has been unanimously found guilty of setting fire to his enemy's house at Vaisali at night, and causing thereby the death of two sleeping children who could not be removed in time. He has been sentenced to death. The cause of enmity was the persistent demand for the fifty *Panas* he owed. He was caught red-handed, and has confessed." " He could have been thrown into that very fire and killed under our law, as he was caught red-handed. As that was not done, let him be taken away and speared to death. Murder by incendiarism to a dwelling house at night deserves a death sentence," said Chandragupta. The man was removed.

The next was a man of 40. " This man," read Khallataka, " was sent out of the village of Kundagrama for persistently fighting with the elders. So, one night he

maliciously breached the bund of the village irrigation-tank in order to cause a failure of crops. A villager who was going that night for the purchase of medicine for his child, saw the act and raised an alarm, and the man was caught, and the breach closed and the tank saved. He has been sentenced to death." "He richly deserved to be thrown into the reservoir and drowned. As that was not done and as the tank was saved, I do not consider a death-sentence necessary now. Let him atone for his sin against irrigation-sources by being put on the *Sudarsana* lake works for fourteen years," said Chandragupta.

Next came a man of 50. Khallataka read, "This man is from Gridhrakuta. He enticed a boy of three and offered his severed head to the Goddess *Kali* in a vain attempt to make her show some hidden treasure to him. He has been sentenced to the Suvarnagiri mines for life." "Let him be beheaded just as he decapitated the boy," said Chandragupta. "Such men cannot reform in this life."

Then was brought a woman of 45. "This woman," read Khallataka, "posed as a pilgrim in the village of Sitakund, and was hospitably entertained in a farmer's house. That night she gave some sweets to the members of the farmer's family as *Prasadam*[5]. These contained powdered *Dhatura* seeds. All who ate the sweets fell down unconscious. The woman decamped with the valuables in the house, but was caught when running away. Previously, another hostess who had entertained her had died from the administration of such poison. She has been sentenced to death." "She is an enemy of society, and has also committed a murder by poisoning. It does not matter

5. Consecrated food offered to the gods.

that she is a woman. Let her be drowned to death as ordered by our Sastras," said Chandragupta.

The next was a man of 25 who had been found guilty of raping a young married woman, and then killing her to hide his crime. He had been sentenced to death. "Confirmed," said Chandragupta.

Then came thirty dacoits who had waylaid travellers on the royal road between Tamralipti and Pataliputra, and robbed them all of their money and wounded many. They had been sentenced to work in the mines at Suvarnagiri for life. "Confirmed," said the King. "For gold they sinned, to gold they shall dedicate their lives."

The next case was that of a witness who had, for a bribe, given false evidence in a murder case and caused an innocent man to be speared to death. He had been sentenced to death. "Confirmed," said Chandragupta." "This is as much murder as killing with his own hand."

The next case related to twenty villagers of Pandugati. "These men refused alms to seven ascetics, who thereupon performed some rites of black-magic. That night ten houses in the village caught fire. The ascetics boasted that it was the result of their black-magic. Thereupon these men threw them into the fire, and burnt them to death. They have all been sentenced to a fine of two-hundred *Panas* each," said Khallataka. "Reduced to a fine of twelve *Panas* each," said Chandragupta. "With these 240 *Panas* a small temple to *Hariti*, the Goddess who removes all evils, shall be constructed in the village."

Then came a man of Pataliputra who had forced himself on a dancing-girl. He had been fined twelve *Panas*. "Confirmed," said the King. "The money will be given to the woman."

Then came a mahout who had negligently allowed his elephant to gore to death a man of Pataliputra. He had been sentenced to pay a fine of five-hundred *Panas*. "Confirmed," said Chandragupta. "Men should control their beasts."

"The cases are finished. Since the last public Court three bribe-takers and eighteen false witnesses have been banished from the realm. Now, let those Brahmins, ascetics, orphans, widows and others who complain that they are denied justice by His Majesty's Judges come forward," announced the Lord Chamberlain.

A number of Brahmins stepped forward, and prayed for the exemption of Brahmin criminals from branding. "Now a Brahmin criminal is branded with the figure of a dog for theft, the flag of a vintner for drinking, a triangle for rape, and a headless body for murder. This is cruel and painful. By abolishing it, Your Majesty will earn the blessings of the Brahmins and escape their curses," said their leader. Chandragupta replied, "I am very sorry that I am unable to accede to your request. The other castes are awarded even more terrible punishments. A weaver refusing to work after receiving his wages has his thumb cut off: a Sudra committing rape on a Brahmin woman is burnt alive in mats: there are eighteen kinds of tortures for people convicted of grave crimes, like hanging them head downwards by their legs and lashing them and burning their finger-joints. All these punishments have been prescribed by great Sages, and we kings have to carry them out. If one part is changed, the others too will have to be changed in order that justice may still remain in accordance with our social scheme, and not be progressively lightened for some castes and weighted against others." "There is banishment also provided for Brahmin criminals; so there can be no

serious objection to the abolition of the branding which is only an additional punishment," said the Brahmin leader. "I am sorry. The branding must remain, so that the people of the countries to which these Brahmins go may know them to be criminals and not mistake them for worthy Brahmins of our country, and thereby have a low estimate ot the Brahmins of our country," said the Emperor. "The same reason which makes us mark our damaged goods differently from the sound ones applies here also." The Brahmins withdrew.

Then a deputation of the citizens of Sravasti went before the King, and complained that the Governor and the high officers of that place had increased the revenues of that Province two-fold within the last one year, though there had been no increase in the income of the people, or accidental receipts like treasure-trove property confiscated to the State, fines levied from Government servants, compensation for damage to Government property, escheats, presentations to the King or phenomenal sales of timber from the forests. "The receipts were verified last *Vyushta* (New Year's Day)," they added. Chandragupta asked Chanakya what he had to say. Chanakya said, "In Book I, Chapter IX, of my *Arthasastra*, compiled under Your Majesty's authority, I have clearly said, 'Whoever doubles the King's revenue eats into the vitals of the country. He shall, if the offence be small, be warned not to repeat his action, but if the offence be grave he shall be punished severely." "Sirs," asked Chandragupta of the deputationists, "Is this their first offence? What is their general repute?" "It is their first offence," said they. "We have no other complaint against them." "They will be warned not to repeat the offence," said Chandragupta. The deputation withdrew, satisfied.

Some pilgrims went up next, and complained that when they and ten others were visiting *Kamakhya* temple in Kamrup, a body of Nagas had carried away their ten comrades for being made slaves, and that complaints to the King of Kamrup were of no avail. Rakshasa rose and said that he had just then received information that eight of them had been released after General Bhadrabhata had sent a punitive expedition, that the ninth preferred to remain with the Nagas as their Chief's *Guru*, and that the tenth had died in captivity. "It is good that one of our pilgrims has gone as *Guru* to these head-hunters, human sacrificers and slave-holders. For, the best way to stop these evils is by converting them through good *Gurus*," said Chandragupta.

One of the cooks in the royal kitchen then went and complained that Chanakya had ordered him to be dismissed, because he had used far more fire-wood for cooking than the calculated quantity. "Surely," said he, "a Great Emperor like Your Majesty is not to be rationed out fire-wood, oil, rice and other things of trifling value, which even rich merchants and officers do not worry about." Chanakya rose and said, "Your Majesty is a trustee of the poor cultivators, whose hard-earned money we collect in taxes. Nothing necessary is denied to the cooks. I only prevent waste. This man was leaving the fire-wood blazing outside the hearth carelessly, while wandering about the kitchen-compound gossiping with the servants. I warned him thrice, and then dismissed him as an example to the rest. It is these little things which ultimately swell up the expenses and unbalance the budget, like millions of locusts eating up crops which an elephant cannot eat up!" "What loss did he actually cause?" asked Chandragupta. "Forty-three *Panas*," said Chanakya. "This sum will be made good to the public revenues from our Privy Purse, and the

man reinstated. If he does not improve, he will be liable to dismissal again," said Chandragupta amidst applause.

The next was a deputation from the women of Manipur for permission to have a Woman's Bazaar, where only women and royalty could buy or sell. "What is the special object?" asked Chandragupta. "Just to make Manipur unique in India." "The license is granted in perpetuity," said the King amidst laughter.

A representative of the merchant-guilds of Bharukachcha complained that counterfeit coins were becoming dangerously common in their town, that the Lakshanadhyakshah, the Superintendent of the Mint, had not taken care to see that his subordinates cut all such coins to pieces as ordered by the venerable Chanakya, and that several merchants were selling the coins for less than their value as the gold and silver in them were less than the standard fixed. The Emperor promised to direct the Superintendent of the Mint, the Viceroy of Ujjaini, and the Governor of Saurashtra, to enforce the orders strictly.

Thereafter some citizens of Pataliputra complained that the Superintendent of liquor-shops had allowed liquor-shops to be near each other in their locality, that liquor was sold even to criminals contrary to rules, that the shops were being located in good buildings and provided with fine beds and seats and flowers and fruits, that the Superintendent of Prostitutes was sending attractive dancing-girls there, and that young men of respectable families were thereby being led into drinking and vice. They also prayed for the strict enforcement of the curfew between 9 p.m. and 3 a.m., and of the routes by which corpses were to be taken to the burning-grounds. The Emperor asked the City Magistrates to enquire into the complaint regarding

the liquor-shops and submit a report. He directed the trumpets to be sounded punctually at 9 p.m. and 3 a.m. for enforcing the curfew orders. He ordered also fines to be imposed on all people who carried corpses by other than the prescribed routes.

Then Chanakya's son-in-law, Agnisarma, stepped forward and said, "Your Majesty was pleased on your last birthday to grant, orally, a pension of five-hundred *Panas* per month to maintain myself, my wife Rajarajeswari and our son Radhagupta. The venerable Chanakya has cancelled this grant. How can a Minister cancel Your Majesty's order?" "I did not cancel the order," said Chanakya, intervening. "I merely waived the grant." "How can a man waive a thing which was not given to him but to his son-in-law?" asked Agnisarma. "A son-in-law belongs to a different family altogether." Chandragupta asked the Lord Chief Justice Sankirtyayana to give his opinion. He said, "Agnisarma's objection is valid in law. No man can waive what belongs to another." "But my son-in-law lives and eats in my house with his wife and child," said Chanakya. "That will not make them members of the venerable Chanakya's family," said Sankirtyayana. "And the pension was given to him for being my son-in-law, and so was indirectly a gift to me, and I can relinquish it," said Chanakya. "Oh, no," said Sankirtyayana. "The motive or occasion for a gift cannot be gone into when considering its validity, except to see if it was illegal or immoral." "The gift is renewed now as a *Srotriya Brahmadaya Sarvaswadanam* gift[6]. From the revenues of Kundagrama, six-thousand *Panas* will be paid annually to Agnisarma and his descendants for ever," said Chandragupta amidst loud applause from the assembled people.

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6. A gift to Brahmins learned in the Vedas.

Then the Court rose at 1 p.m. amidst cries of "Jaya, Jaya Maharaja[7] ! Jai Sitaram[8] !"

Agnisarma rushed home and spread the news of his grant for life to Gautami and Rajarajeswari, and then went away as he did not like to meet Chanakya. When Chanakya returned home, Gautami sent, as usual, the child Radhagupta, aged 18 months, to meet his grandfather. The little boy toddled up to Chanakya, and held fast to his knees. Chanakya picked him up, and kissed and fondled him. Gautami then went and asked, "What news at the Palace to-day? Rajarajeswari's husband came and told her an interesting story." "Did he? asked Chanakya.' "Perhaps the fool does not know that I myself knew everything about the legal position, and opposed the grant only on sentimental grounds because we had never received any gifts for ourselves in our family for generations, and this might be construed as a gift made to me as he was living with us." "That is exactly what he himself told Rajarajeswari, adding that Sankirtyayana too told him so," said Gautami. "Then he is not such a fool as I thought." "How could he be when he prevailed in an argument over you, a thing which no man has accomplished yet?" asked Gautami. "Now I will have my bath and food," said Chanakya. The water is ready for your bath," said Gautami. "By the way, the Emperor has sent three choice packets of *Poppods*[9], five jars of green pepper-pickles and seven rolls of mango-jam, all from Kerala." "He shouldn't have bothered to get all these things for me from such a distance. Still, they are too petty to be returned, and I shall also miss them if I do. So let us keep them. Only, when thanking him, I shall say that he should not think of sending such presents to me for at least another year," said Chanakya after inspecting them in detail. Then he went to take his bath.

7. Victory to the King.
8. Praise be to God!
9. Thin savoury cakes, fried and eaten by Hindus.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

CHANAKYA INSTRUCTS THE PRINCE

PRINCE Bindusara had returned from Takshasila in October 298 B.C., after handing over the Viceroyalty to Balagupta. He had discharged the duties of the Viceroy for three years, and done yeoman work in the great famine. In August 297 B.C., Chanakya gave him, at his request, a course of lessons on Politics and the Duties of Kings.

On the first day, after prayer, he began: " Prince, you have now reached an age when you will have to grasp firmly the principles of government and aid your father whose health is giving way, in the management of his vast Empire, and become a *Yuvaraj* in reality. You have had already some experience of governing a Viceroyalty. You have also seen the working of some of our Departments. Now it is but meet that you should be instructed in the fundamentals of Economics and Politics, and the Duties of Kings. At the instance of your father, I have already compiled an *Arthasastra* or Treatise on Statecraft including Politics, Economics and Public Finance. It is divided into fifteen Books which deal with Discipline, the duties of Government Superintendents, Rules of everyday law, how to remove the thorns of State, how courtiers ought to conduct themselves, the source of sovereignty, the six-fold

policy, vices and calamities, the work of an invader, war, the conduct of corporations, how to deal with powerful enemies, strategic means to capture a fortress, secret means and devices, and the plan of a treatise. You will soon begin the reading of that book. My talks to you now are but preliminaries to prepare you for a detailed study of the book. "Firstly, I shall deal with the end of all sciences. The most important of the four generally acknowledged Sciences is *Anvikshaki* which comprises the philosophy of *Lokayata* or utilitarianism, *Sankhya* or ceaseless effort regardless of results, and *Yoga* or dedicating every act to God. *Anvikshaki* is the highest of all Sciences, keeps the mind steady in weal and woe, gives an inner harmony and peace, bestows real insight into things, gives a sweetness to speech and action, and is of inestimable benefit even for this world, let alone the next. It is the Science of Sciences, the light to all knowledge, the receptacle of all virtues and good things." "I thought it was more necessary for Brahmins and ascetics than for Princes," said Bindusara. "Oh, no, it is important for one and all. It gives peace of mind. And what happiness is there without peace of mind?" asked Chanakya.

He proceeded, "The next important Science is the Vedic lore, the three *Vedas* which enable us to discriminate between righteous and unrighteous acts. The third is *Varta* or agriculture, cattle-breeding and trade. A study of this is essential to acquire wealth and to avoid poverty. The fourth Science is *Dandaniti*, or the Science of Government, which is essential to establish justice and remain powerful, and put down injustice and the tendency to grow weak and die.

"The people are divided into four castes and four *Asramas*. The duty of the *Brahmin* caste is study, teaching, performance of sacrifice, officiating at other

people's sacrifices, and the giving and receiving of gifts. The duty of the *Kshatriya* is study, performance of sacrifice, giving gifts, military occupation and protection of life. The duty of a *Vaisya* is study, performance of sacrifice, giving gifts, agriculture, cattle-breeding and trade. The duty of a *Sudra* is serving the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas, agriculture, cattle-breeding and trade, and doing the work of Court-Bards and artisans.

"Now to the *Asramas*. The duty of a *Brahmacharin* is learning the Vedas, worshipping the fire, doing ablutions, living on the proceeds of begging, and devotion to his Teacher, Teacher's son and classmates. The duty of a *Grihastha*, or householder, is earning his livelihood by his own profession, marriage among equals of other *Gotras*, having conjugal relations with his wife, making gifts to Gods, Ancestors, Guests and servants, and feeding himself on what is left. The duty of a *Vanaprastha*, or forest-recluse, is observance of strict continence, sleeping on the bare ground, keeping his locks of hair matted, wearing a deer-skin, worshipping the fire, performing ablutions, worshipping the Gods, his Ancestors and his Guests, and living upon foodstuffs procurable in forests. The duty of a *Parivrajaka*, or ascetic, is complete control of the organs of sense, abstaining from all kinds of work for profit, disowning money, withdrawing from society, begging in many places, dwelling in forests and cultivating internal and external purity. *Ahimsa* or abstaining from inflicting unnecessary injury on others, truthfulness, purity, freedom from spite and cruelty, and a spirit of forgiveness are duties incumbent on all human beings. The observance of one's own duty leads to heaven, the usurpation of the duties of others will lead to confusion of castes and duties. Hence the King should see that everybody does his duty as laid down above."

"But, Reverend Sir, the Yavanas of the northwest do not have the caste-system or the four *Asramas*, and yet seem to be as cultured and happy as ourselves. Then why preserve the castes and *Asramas* ?" asked Bindusara.

"Child, didn't I say that the performance of one's own duty leads to happiness, and the non-performance to misery? So, we must observe castes and *Asramas* for our happiness, whereas they need not. A white skin is natural to them, a patch of white on our skins may be an indication of disease." "I see," said Bindusara. "I have long wanted to ask you two things. Shall I ask them now?" "Do." "Why did such a great General like Alexander fail to persuade his troops to march to Magadha, though they had willingly fought the turbulent tribes of the northwest frontier and the Punjab who were better soldiers than the troops of the Nandas under Baddhasala?" "A gang of thieves once laboriously broke into a kitchen of a Palace in order to feast on the delicacies there. The men unwittingly began by drinking the contents of a bottle of castor-oil mistaking it for honey in the darkness. Of course, their only anxiety after that was to beat as hasty a retreat as possible in order to get over the effect of this initial mistake. So too, Alexander and his men began with the northwest frontier and the Punjab, which contain the most turbulent and unassimilable tribes of India, and had therefore to beat a hasty retreat when they learnt that the Asvakas had revolted and closed the Passes. Had they begun with South India or Bengal, they might have had a far better time, just as the thieves would have had if they had begun with sugar or milk." Bindusara laughed.

"What is your second question?" asked Chanakya. "Why did Seleukos yield the four great Provinces of Aria, Arachosia, Gedrosia and Parapanisadai in return for our paltry gift of five-hundred elephants?" "Because he could

not rule these Provinces, and they were only a source of weakness to him, whereas our elephants were really of the greatest service to him in winning the battle of Ipsos over his formidable rival Antigonos. He only adopted the well-known principles of sound politics. Sovereignty has to be kept unimpaired by following the appropriate policy from among the six-fold policy of peace, war, neutrality, sudden invasion without war, new alliances, and concluding peace with one and declaring war on another. It is the sixth of these policies that Seleukos followed." "But I think he wanted also to hide his defeat by pretending that the five-hundred elephants we gave represented a fair exchange." "Yes. That kind of window-dressing is essential for a King. A King who proclaims openly his defeat and beheads his commanders, as the Skythian King does, will soon find his subjects and soldiers discouraged, and his enemies encouraged. Defeats should be dressed up as strategic retreats to one's subjects, though the truth should ever be kept before one's own mind and effective steps taken to remedy the defects and get over the reverses. I shall continue to-morrow."

Chanakya resumed his instruction the next day. "The study of the three *Vedas* is essential for righteous conduct. That of *Varta* is essential for keeping the kingdom in a prosperous condition by having the grain, food-stuffs, cattle, gold, and other materials necessary for the sustenance of life. The whole world revolves on the belly. *Dandaniti*, or the Science of Government, with rewards for the virtuous and punishments for the criminals, is essential to safeguard *Anvikshaki*, the three *Vedas* and *Varta*. The progress of the world depends on good government. Punishment is necessary so long as man is man. When it is kept in abeyance, the law of the fish *(Matsyanyaya)* will prevail, and the strong will swallow the weak. So, Magistrates with the

King's punishment-rod to act as a sanction for their judgment, are essential for the progress of any country.

"Fines, imprisonment, mutilation and death are the usual punishments awarded. Our *Sastras* say that a king should fast for one day if a guilty person is not punished, and that he should fast for three days if an innocent man is punished." "Why this distinction?" asked Bindusara. "Because the punishing of an innocent man does three times as much injury to society, as allowing a guilty man to escape unpunished," said Chanakya. "How should prisoners be treated in jail?" asked Bindusara.

"They should be given specific work and treated well. They must be visited by Jail-visitors daily, or at least once in five days, and asked about their work and treatment. Small sums of money may be granted to their families in deserving cases. The adolescent, old, diseased and destitute prisoners of good behaviour should be set free on the King's Birthdays and on Full-Moon days. They should also be released on the acquisition of a new territory, the Anointment of the Crown Prince, and on the birth of a Son to the king." "How should the prisoners be treated after their release?" asked Bindusara. "*Manu* says that a person who has undergone his punishment and has been released must be deemed to have become pure again, having been purged of his sin by punishment, So, he may be treated like any other citizen for purpose of employment, protection etc.," replied Chanakya.

"Is Capital-punishment good?" asked the Prince. "It is necessary in murder, treason and other cases. There are several people who will be deterred from committing those crimes only by the extreme penalty of death. Like war against marauders from outside, it is an unavoidable necessity against marauders from inside.

As already stated, in matters of Government, expediency counts far more than what is absolutely just or desirable. We will stop here to-day."

Chanakya resumed the next day. "Discipline is of two kinds, artificial and natural. One is like the lion tamed by the person exhibiting it, the other is the natural tameness of the cow. A Prince should discipline himself. He should learn reading, writing and arithmetic after the Tonsure and before being invested with the Sacred-Thread. After being invested with the Sacred-Thread he should learn the *Vedas*, *Varta*, *Dandaniti* and *Anvikshaki* from acknowledged experts. He should marry only after attaining the age of sixteen as you did. He should see that he has a son and heir as soon as possible, in order to ensure a peaceful succession and discourage assassins who will gain nothing by killing him. He shall associate with aged Professors of Science, and imitate their discipline. He should keep a rigorous routine. In the forenoon he should receive lessons in the military arts concerning the management of elephants, cavalry, chariots and infantry and manipulating the siege and projectile machines, and learn strategy from acknowledged experts with practical experience of war. He shall also hear stories of the heroes of the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas*, so that his mind may be filled with worthy and noble ideals to emulate. He shall be taught history and *Varta* and *Dandaniti* in the afternoon. At night he shall revise his lessons. Efficiency in learning does not come by itself. It comes only from steady perseverance and application. The King who is well educated and disciplined, and is devoted to the good government of his subjects, and is bent on doing good to all people will be master of the earth.

"He should restrain his organs of sense, and shake off lust, anger, greed, vanity, arrogance and foolish

revelry. The sole aim of all sciences is the restraint of the organs of sense. Karala, the Vaideha, perished because of his lascivious attempt on a Brahmin maiden. Talajangha perished because of his anger directed against the family of Bhrigu. Ajabindu, the Sauvira, fell because of his greedy exactions. Ravana perished because of his unwillingness to restore Sita, prompted by his vanity that he was equal to Rama in prowess ; so too, Duryodhana because of his vanity that he could fight Arjuna and Krishna. Kartaveeryarjuna of the Haihaya dynasty perished because of his arrogance. The *Vrishnis* perished because of their foolish revelry and senseless joking with Vyasa; and Vatapi came to grief in an equally foolish joke with Agastya. So, restrain your organs of sense, and cast off the evil passions, and you will be the master of the earth. We shall resume our study to-morrow."

Chanakya resumed it the next day. "All undertakings depend on finance. Hence foremost attention should be paid to the Treasury. The main sources of revenue are towns, the country parts, mines, forests, plantations, cattle, rivers and the sea and customs. Tolls, fines, fees on weights and measures, coinage tax, passport dues, liquor-licenses, slaughterhouse-licenses, yarn-tax, taxes on oil, sugar, ghee, gold jewels, and sales, prostitute-license fees, gambling-license fees, building-license fees, pilgrim-taxes and taxes levied on entering buildings of public interest are the revenues from Towns. The produce from Crown lands, the sixth share of the produce on private lands, pilgrim-taxes, dues from tolls, ferries, ships, pasture-grounds, roads, coir, and fines on villages come under receipts from the Country.

"Gold, silver, diamonds, gems, corals, conch-shells, metals, salt and other minerals form receipts from Mines. Receipts from sale of flowers and fruits and sugar-cane from State-gardens constitute income from Plantations.

Game-forests, timber-forests and elephant-forests yield the revenue under Forests. The proceeds of cows, buffaloes, goats, sheep, asses, camels, horses and mules from the State-herds come under receipts from Herds. The one-sixth share of the fish caught in the rivers and the sea, treasure-trove, fares from passengers on Government-ships and the sale-proceeds of confiscated private ships which are not destroyed form the income from the Rivers and the Sea. Customs receipts are taken on foreign goods landed in ports.

"So far regarding Income. Now we come to Expenditure. Expenditure is of three kinds, Routine, Productive Investments and Extraordinary Expenditure. The Civil Lists and the expenditure for carrying on the King's government come under Routine Expenditure; the thirty-million *Panas* spent on constructing the *Sudarsana* lake come under Productive Investments; the ten-million *Suvarnas* spent on famine-relief recently come under Extraordinary Expenditure.

"Both income and expenditure must be scrutinised carefully. There are forty methods of embezzlement known to Government servants. Men are naturally fickle-minded. Like horses at work, they exhibit constant changes in their temper. Just as it is impossible not to taste the honey, or the poison, that finds itself at the tip of the tongue, so it is impossible for a Government servant not to eat up at least a portion of the King's revenues. As fish under the water cannot be detected drinking the water, as the movements of birds high up in the air cannot be known exactly, so too the embezzlements of Government servants when engaged in dealing with Government monies and the complicated accounts cannot be wholly detected. So, the Government servants should be transferred from place to place and from one work to another, and the evil mitigated, but

it can never be wholly eradicated. True informants of embezzlements shall be given 1/6 of the amounts recovered if they are not Government servants, and one-twelfth of the amounts recovered if they are also Government servants. If the information is false, the informants shall be whipped. We shall continue our lessons to-morrow."

Chanakya continued his teaching the next day. "Now a word about Sovereignty and how to preserve it unimpaired. The elements of Sovereignty are eight, namely, the King, the Ministers, the Country, the Fort, the Treasury, the Army, the Allies and the Curbing of the Enemy. Sovereignty has to be kept unimpaired by following the suitable policy from among the six policies enumerated already. He who clings to peace when his enemy is bent upon war and sudden invasion, will be ruined. He who launches on war with insufficient resources or with inadequate preparation, rushes to certain destruction. A King's policy and intentions should be carefully concealed from prospective enemies. It will not do to discuss everything in public, The following story will illustrate the point :

"There were two prominent householders in Usagrama. They were both lavish entertainers of strangers visiting the village. But whenever any strangers went to their houses, they had to decide whether they would be treated as honoured guests and fed inside the house, or fed on the verandahs like common people. One householder always used to discuss and settle this point after consulting his wife openly in the presence of the guests, with the result that many of the guests were offended and some even actually assaulted him, and all went away with a low opinion of him. The other householder however was very popular with all the guests, and never had the slightest unpleasantness with any. The first householder one day approached the second, and asked him the reason for

this difference. 'Oh', was the reply, 'I and my wife never discuss the thing in public. If the guest is to be seated inside the house, she adjusts her hair with the right hand; if he is to be seated on the verandah, she adjusts her hair with the left hand. Having settled the question thus secretly, we welcome the guest with all joy and take him to the allotted place and feed him, and he leaves with the impression that we never discussed his status at all.'

"The moral of that story is of the widest application. You must have seen the Emperor fondle the hoopoes constantly as if he were a bird-fancier. That is the impression deliberately sought to be created. Indeed, even the astute Megasthenes went away with that impression. The secret is, of course, that the birds go out constantly and bring in cypher messages which the Emperor peruses, when fondling them, and thus gets timely warnings, intimations and intelligence.

" Sovereignty is possible only with assistance. A single wheel can never move. Hence a King shall employ Ministers and hear their opinions. A wise King should profit even from the sensible utterance of a child. How much more so by consultations with experienced Ministers? The Ministers must be natives, born of high family, well trained in arts, possessed of foresight, wise, of retentive memory, bold, eloquent, skilful, intelligent, enthusiastic, dignified, possessed of endurance, pure in character, affable, loyal, of good conduct, strength, health and bravery, not dilatory or feeble-minded, affectionate and free from cantankerousness. They shall be tested by the King, Prime Minister and Purohit with religious allurements, monetary allurements, love allurements and threat allurements, but in such a way as not to pollute what is pure but only to find out the good from the bad.

"The king shall have an efficient System of Spies of all kinds,—fraudulent disciples, recluses, householders, merchants, ascetics, schoolboys, poisoners, incendiaries, mendicants and prostitutes. There shall be Stationary Spies and Touring Spies. There shall be Superintending Spies spying on spies. The report of a Spy shall not be believed in unless it is corroborated by two other independent Spies. Spies shall not only find out the secrets about Officers and citizens, but also the whereabouts and movements of Foreign Spies.

"A King should combine in himself the duties of *Indra* and *Yama*, and deal out rewards and punishments. He shall use conciliation, gifts, dissension and punishment, as the four means of quelling disaffection.

"He shall remove all Ministers found guilty of carelessness, intoxication and talking in sleep, and betraying Council secrets to women or others. He shall despise none, but hear the opinions of all. A wise man shall make use of even a child's sensible utterance.

"His Council of Ministers may contain 12, 16, 20, or as many as the needs of his dominion require. The Ministers are his eyes. A thousand Sages form Indra's Council of Ministers. So, he is called the 'thousand-eyed,' though he has only two eyes.

"A King shall never cause his petitioners to wait at the door, or make himself inaccessible. He shall personally attend to matters relating to Gods, heretics, Brahmins, cattle, Sacred Places, minors, the aged, the afflicted, the helpless and women. He should also attend personally to the national calamities which are eight in number, namely, Famine, Floods, Pestilential Diseases, Demons, Fire, Rats, Serpents and Tigers." "I have heard of the first three of them and can also understand the fifth. But the other four appear to be new, and rather too trivial to be termed

national calamities." "They appear so on first thoughts, but deeper reflection will show the truth of my observation. There are not less than one-thousand-million rats in India on a modest computation. They eat up and waste foodstuffs enough to feed a hundred-million men. They also destroy clothes, timber and constructions worth millions of *Suvarnas* every year. The tigers and serpents not only kill thousands of human beings every year, but also render vast tracts of land uncultivable by the fear they generate. The six-hundred-and-sixty-million known Demons of our land cause a greater waste of time, money and energy, and a more serious fear and debility than any foreign enemy. The worst passions of man are roused by these Demons of various types." "How can we tackle this problem?" "Conquer evil by good, untruth by truth, Demons by Gods. Instal more temples to the Gods, and starve out the Demons by diverting their offerings to the Gods."

"Talking of dissensions, what are the prime causes of dissensions among men?" "Marriage, debts, houses, lands, contracts, deposits and gambling are the causes of almost all civil disputes and dissensions." "What kinds of marriages can be recognised by the King?" "There are eight forms recognised in our *Sastras*, four approved and four unapproved. There are, besides, dozens of forms valid by caste-custom. Any kind of marriage is approvable provided it pleases all those who are concerned in it and are affected by it." "Should a wife be given any separate property?" "It is incumbent on every man who can afford it to settle a maintenance amount of at least two-thousand *Panas* on his wife, besides giving her jewels for which, of course, there is no limit." "Should a King tolerate all the various practices, or make his subjects conform to one excellent type?" "Life cannot be made to conform to one type, however excellent. An attempt to

do so is sure to fail. Even if it succeeds, it will only lead to a state resembling death in life, like all people having their noses cut or pulled out in order that all may be of the same length. Let each caste enjoy its customs and liberties, so long as that does not endanger the liberties of the rest. Besides, an attempt to compel castes to give up their customs may lead to fierce and prolonged revolts, which will ultimately destroy the State. No foreign invasion will be half so dangerous as such a revolt. So, never try to bring about such a dangerous and ugly uniformity.

"Now I shall conclude these talks. A Brahmin's salvation lies in taking religious vows, performing sacrifices, and taking the final ablution after giving suitable fees to the Priests who assist him. A King's salvation is obtained in a different way. Readiness for action is his religious vow, satisfactory discharge of duties is his performance of sacrifice, equal attention to all is his offer of fees and ceremonial ablution. In the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness, in their welfare his welfare; whatever pleases him he shall not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects he shall consider as good. Thus shall he be ever active and discharge his duties, for the root of wealth is activity, and the root of poverty is indolence which destroys present and future acquisitions."

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE ROMANCE OF SUBHADRANGI

ANYBODY privileged to have a look into the Palace-gardens any fine evening in August 297 B.C., would have found a host of nurses, under the direction of Devabhranta, looking after two young Princes, Susima *alias* Sumana aged three, and Asokavardhana aged two. He would have also seen their mother Subhadrangi sitting near them, and watching them play with each other and with Radhagupta, the 18 months old grandson of Chanakya. If it had not been a very busy day, Chandragupta and Chanakya also would have been watching them with proud and loving eyes. It was a great consolation to Chandragupta, with diabetes sapping his system and with death awaiting him not very far round the corner, to see two such sturdy grandsons. The story of their mother Subhadrangi's marriage with Bindusara had been a most romantic one even in those days, when romance was more common than now.

It was early in 302 B.C. Bindusara had been crowned *Yuvaraj*[1] already, at the very commencement of his sixteenth year, the year of majority for the Hindus of *Gauda*[2], and had married two Princesses, Lajjavati of

1. Young King or Assistant King.
2. Bengal and Behar.

Kalinga and Suryakanta of Ujjaini. He was already noted throughout the Empire for his courage, manliness, eloquence and commonsense. He had not yet been sent to Takshasila as Viceroy, and was living in a separate Palace near the 'Suganga' Palace, with Khallataka as his Minister and Agnisarma as his Private Secretary. Lajjavati and Suryakanta both tried their best to monopolise his affections. But, within a few months of their marriage, Subhadrangi had become the third Queen and had, from the very outset, overshadowed them completely.

Devasarma, her father, was a poor Brahmin of Champa. Even at birth Subhadrangi was amazingly beautiful. All the astrologers had, on examining her horoscope, declared with one voice that she would certainly become an Empress, and would become the mother of the greatest Emperor the world would see. Fired with this prophecy, and believing implicitly in its truth, the proud father tried to make it an accomplished fact, by taking his girl who was now 15, to Bindusara's Palace so that she might attract the Prince's attention and be married by him. Devasarma had no doubt whatever that, once Bindusara saw her, he would fall in love with her at once and marry her.

Devasarma was told by the Palace servants that both the Queens, while differing about all other things, were agreed in excluding from the Palace and the notice of the Prince any beautiful high-born maiden. So he found it to be hopeless to introduce Subhadrangi into the Palace openly. But, he was a man with a fertile brain capable of devising means of getting over obstacles. His daughter was not only beautiful, but was also an expert in music, dancing and several other arts. Devasarma now taught her manicuring and hair-dressing also, and, disguising her as a lady-barber, introduced her into

Bindusara's Palace in that humble capacity. He asked Subhadrangi to wait patiently, and choose a favourable opportunity for attracting the attention of the Prince.

Subhadrangi was as clever as her father. She assumed her role very well, and soon made herself equally popular with Suryakanta and Lajjavati. Both of them marvelled at her great beauty and accomplishments, but did not suspect anything.

Subhadrangi did not all at once try to attract Bindusara's attention. She waited patiently till she had secured a permanent footing in the Palace, and had quieted even latent suspicions.

About three months after her entry into the Palace, when Lajjavati and Suryakanta had gone to the 'Suganga' Palace to attend a party there given by Santavati, and Bindusara was alone, she sat in her room singing entrancingly. Bindusara was attracted by her beautiful voice and flawless diction, and listened enraptured. Then he tip-toed to her room and looked in, marvelling at her beauty of form which excelled even her beautiful voice in perfection. She went on singing as if she had not seen him. Mad with love and desire, Bindusara went inside and told her, "Subhadrangi, what a voice you have got! And what a face!" She stopped her song, blushed, and held down her head. He patted her cheek. Her face suffused with pleasure, and she looked straight at him with those wonderful eyes of hers full of love and tenderness. Unable to control himself any longer, he caught her wildly in his arms and pressed her to his bosom, and imprinted a burning kiss on her lips. Her body became like a heap of flowers in his embrace, and her breasts heaved and fell against his manly bosom. Tears of joy came from her eyes. Bindusara said to her, "Oh, beloved one, what a pity that you are a barber and that I, a high-born

Kshatriya, cannot therefore make you my Queen!" "I am not a barber, my Lord. I am a high-born Brahmin maiden, daughter of Devasarma of Champa. I loved Your Highness as soon as I saw you go out for hunt in Champa one day, and swore to love you and none else. Hence this disguise. Now my heart's desire has been accomplished." "I too thought that you must be a Brahmin or Kshatriya," said Bindusara. "That face so full of grace, that flawless diction, that dignity, cannot belong to a barber maiden. I marry you here and now in the *Gandharva* way, allowed to Kings and Princes."

When Lajjavati and Suryakanta returned after the party, Bindusara told them of his marriage with Subhadrangi. After the first shock was over, they both reconciled themselves to this marriage, the more so as they loved Subhadrangi more than they loved each other.

Chandragupta, Chanakya, Rakshasa and Khallataka also approved of the marriage when they were told about it. "A Queen from Champa, within the home province of Magadha, will endear the royal house to the Magadhas," said Chanakya. The formal marriage was celebrated with great pomp in May 302 B. C. And Bindusara took her with him to Takshasila, when he went there as Viceroy in October next year.

The next year a Prince was born to Subhadrangi. He was named Susima *alias* Sumana. He was very handsome in appearance. A year after Sumana's birth the Princess gave birth to another Prince, Asokavardhana, who was rather ugly to look at, But Asoka was the darling of one and all. When Sumana was three and Asoka two, Bindusara called the great Ajivaka Saint Pingala Vatsajiva, who was said to be gifted with a true insight into the past, present and future, and asked him about the future of the two Princes

and as to who would become King after him. "Asoka will become King after you, and will be the greatest King who has ever ruled this country or is ever likely to rule it," said Pingala. "How can that be?" asked Bindusara. "Sumana is the elder one." "Fate does not consider age in its choice," said Pingala Vatsajiva. "It leaves an old man of ninety severely alone, and chooses a child of five to accomplish its end."

CHAPTER XL

VIJAYADASAMI MIDNIGHT

IT was the month of September in the year 297 B.C. The Empire was in the height of its glory and prosperity. In every Province and State there had been plenty of rains. In consequence, the crops were in fine condition. There was no war or rebellion. A network of highly paid Officials and wealthy non-official Honorary Dignitaries administered the Empire ably. Perfect peace reigned within the Empire, and there were the most cordial relations with the Chola, Pandya, Keralaputra, Satyaputra and Simhala kingdoms in the south, and with the Greek States to the west. Patrokles, the Admiral of Seleukos, had just visited Patala, and left it with valuable merchandise. Ocean-voyages were becoming popular even with the non-seafaring peoples of Magadha and Kosala. Inland trade too had increased a hundred-fold owing to the absolute security and the enormous improvement in communications effected by the construction of military roads, royal roads, district roads, village-roads, garden-roads, forest-roads and chariot-roads by Chandragupta and Chanakya. Wealth had also increased correspondingly. There were many merchants who were worth millions, at Pataliputra, Ujjain, Takshasila, Bharukachchha, Machlipatna and Suvarnagiri. Luxuries were increasing. Mansions of all kinds had sprung up. Many

people, especially nobles, officials, landlords and merchants, were building fine comfortable houses outside the forts, as there was perfect security, and as there was no need to live only in the congested fortified areas.

India was becoming unified from Purushapura and Pushkalavati to Kamarupa and Arakan, from Kashmir and Nepal to Cape Comorin and Ceylon. Many things of North India began to be commonly used in South India, and *vice versa*. People from the various Provinces also began to freely migrate to other Provinces. A great colony of northern Jains under Bhadrabahusvamin had gone to the far south and settled down at Sravana Belgola, Brahmagiri, Jatinga, Rameswara and Siddhapura and in the Satyaputra country, and had converted thousands of South Indians to their faith and left their impress for ever. A band of Buddhists too had gone to the South, imitating the Jains, and had settled down in the Suvarnagiri province and at Amaravati, Kanchipura and Nagapatna, and even in the Keralaputra country, and had spread the teachings of the Buddha to thousands of South Indians. Brahmins and other Sanatanist Hindus too had not been behindhand. A number of Brahmins had, at the request of the Chola King, settled down at Kaveripumpattinam, and instituted there an annual *Indra* festival lasting for several days and having songs and dances throughout, to please the southern taste. Some Brahmins had also been settled at Srichandrur or Tiruchendur in the Pandya country, and had begun the process of identifying the southern *Murugan* with the northern *Kartikeya*. A few went to *Subrahmanya* in the Satyaputra country, settled there and began identifying the age-old *Snake-God* there with *Kartikeya*. Slowly but surely, in the sphere of religion, as in the sphere of politics, an All-India system was growing up, albeit with some semi-independent minor entities.

Several thousand families of sturdy farmers and labourers had been settled in Vidarbha, Mahakosala, Gondwana, Kosa, Kuntala, Konkana and Vanavasi under the auspices of the Mauryan officials. The vast hills and forests of the Vindhyas and Satpuras, which had cut off North India from South India for ages, were now being traversed by four trunk-roads. One went along the east coast from Pataliputra to Tamralipti, Tosali, Samapa, Kalingapatam, Machlipatnam, Vengipura and Siddhapura. Another went along the west coast from Bharukachchha to Surat, Sopara, Kalyan, Pratishthana and Suvarnagiri. The third went from Ujjain to Nasik, Pratishthana and Suvarnagiri. The fourth went from Ujjain to Kundanipura, Nandadera, Dhanyaketa, Suvarnagiri and Siddhapura. Besides these roads, there were the growingly popular sea-routes from Tamralipti and Bharukachchha to Muchiri, Machlipatnam, Kaveripumpattinam, Korkai and Simhala.

In North India, there was the grand-trunk-road from Pataliputra to Udabhandapura on the *Indus*, with an extension westwards to the frontier-town of Herat, and another southeastwards to Champa, Vardhamanapura and Tamralipti. Then, there was the great northern road from Pataliputra to Vaisali, Nandangarh, Rampurwa, Rummindei, and Manjupatan. There was also the road from Muttra to Viratapura, Vanakausambi, and Ujjain. There were in addition the water-ways of the *Indus* and *Ganges*, and their innumerable tributaries. Besides these, there were the roads in the Pandya, Chola Keralaputra, and Satyaputra kingdoms connected with the Mauryan roads. There was in particular a fine road to Venkata or Tirupati Hills. Bullock carts and pedestrians were to be found on trunk-roads at all times, especially after Chandragupta made the people of each District collectively responsible for making good the loss by thefts and robberies

caused to travellers within the District. There was a commercial and agricultural boom, and thousands of people had plenty of money to spend. So, when the great *Dasara* or *Navaratri* festival was celebrated in October, the celebrations were on a lavish and magnificent scale. As usual, *Sarasvati*, the Goddess of Learning, *Lakshmi*, the Goddess of Wealth, and *Parvati*, the Goddess of Victory, were worshipped by high and low throughout the Empire. There was universal hilarity. Thousands of poor people were fed in every town, and innumerable puppet-shows, magic-performance, dramatic entertainments, rope-dancing, and dancing and singing parties were held. The only disturbing thing in the midst of all this hilarity was that the Emperor was in a very bad state of health. For the past three years he had been suffering from diabetes. The first diabetic carbuncle had appeared on his body in B. C. 300. Afterwards carbuncles had appeared now and again. They had increased in frequency and seriousness, after the Emperor had given up the special diet prescribed by the Palace Physician, on the ground that death was better than life on a daily diet without salt, butter and sugar. Still, in spite of the two carbuncles which were ripening now, the Emperor had not relaxed any of his normal activities. Indeed, he had slightly increased them in a natural desire to join in the general hilarity of the season.

On the New-Moon day beginning the *Dasara* holidays, 1,000 Brahmins and 10,000 poor people were fed at Pataliputra in his presence. On the fourth day of the *Dasara*, there was a grand tiger-hunt in a royal game-forest ten miles from Pataliputra, reputed to contain a man-eater. Despite the advice of the Palace Physician, the Emperor rode on horseback to the forest to reach it quickly. The

Crown Prince Bindusara, General Bhadrabhata, Rajasena and others also accompanied the Emperor.

On reaching the forest, Chandragupta alighted from the horse, and got upon his elephant *Chandralekha*. A female Body-Guard of twelve, headed by Bahudanti surrounded him on horse-back in their picturesque uniforms. Outside this circle was another circle of expert spearmen under Rajasena. The road was marked off with ropes, which no unauthorised man or woman could cross without being killed forthwith by the male or female Body-Guard. Men with drums and gongs headed the hunting party.

The beaters began their work, and by 4 p.m. they succeeded in cornering the man-eating tiger and two panthers. The Emperor discharged three arrows in quick succession, and the tiger fell down dead within three feet of *Chandralekha*. Bindusara bagged one of the panthers, and Rajasena bagged the other. The hunt was over, and the King, Crown Prince and Generals spent the night in tents in the forest, and returned the next day on horse-back to Pataliputra. The dead tiger and panthers had already been taken to the City in bullock carts, and were paraded through the streets with music, as an additional item of amusement.

The Emperor's carbuncles had become more malignant owing to the extra strain of the riding. Without taking rest even then, the Emperor went on with his early morning cold-baths and rides. On *Ayudha-Puja* day, he worshipped the weapons along with the Generals. Then, on *Vijayadasami* Day, though the carbuncles looked ripe and dangerous, he attended the grand parades of troops, sitting on his horse, and then headed the great military procession of all arms round the crowded streets, to the deafening cheers of hundreds of thousands of citizens.

When he returned to the Palace in the evening, he was very near to collapsing. He took his bath, felt very ill, and was put to bed at once. The Palace Physician examined him, and found his condition very serious. Not only were the carbuncles threatening, but the heart was dangerously weak. His condition was becoming more and more serious every moment, The Crown Prince and Chanakya, Rakshasa, Khallataka and the Generals and chief Officers at the Capital hurried to the Palace on hearing the grave news. Bindusara, Chanakya and Rakshasa alone were in the Emperor's room, besides the Palace Physician and Queens, and the personal attendants. Durdhara was weeping too much, and had to be sent away. Santavati was stunned, and seemed unable to do anything. Devabhranta alone was alert and helpful. She helped Sonottara and Vahinari ably in attending on the Emperor. The hilarity of the city changed into one of sadness and anxiety.

At ten o'clock in the night a special letter was brought addressed to the Emperor himself by the Viceroy of Suvarnagiri. Despite the advice of Chanakya and Rakshasa, Chandragupta insisted on its being opened then and there and its contents read over to him. "Why am I King if I am not even to open and read urgent communications from my Viceroys?" asked he. The letter was opened and read by Chanakya. It ran, "To the Beloved of the Gods, the gracious King Chandragupta, Purushadatta, Viceroy of Suvarnagiri, and the High Officers of Suvarnagiri offer their humble salutations and beg to state as follows :—The great Bhadrabahusvamin, the jewel among the Jainas, being overtaken by old age, followed the noble Jaina way and obtained the liberation of his spirit. He took that great vow of *Sallekhana*[1]. which cannot be completed save

1. Suicide by slow starvation.

by death. He took only a little rice and milk to begin with, and gradually reduced it to a handful of water, and then abandoned. even this, and finally quitted his body and attained liberation in that famous cave which will. hereafter be ever hallowed by the event, and has already been named the 'Bhadrabhahu Cave.'

"His faithful disciple, Rajavaisya Chandragupta Munindra of Ujjain, who too had become a Srutakevalin, and had been served by the forest deities, sat by the mouth of the Cave and performed the same wonderful *Sallekhana*, till he too quitted his body and was liberated. The hill wherein the Bhadrabahu Cave is situate has been already named *Chandragiri Hill* by the pious citizens in honour of the immortal Prince Chandragupta Munindra.

"Knowing the keen interest which Your Majesty takes in things religious, we have despatched this news of the holy men urgently by special courier. Awaiting Your Majesty's commands,

Your humble servants,

The Viceroy, and High Officers of Suvarnagiri."

Chandragupta listend with rapt attention and said, "Well, I too shall join them soon. Issue orders at once to the Viceroy of Suvarnagiri to preserve the Bhadrabahu Cave in good condition and to name the hill officially as the *Chandragiri Hill*, and the Cave as the *Bhadrabahu Cave*. A thousand *Panas* are sanctioned for poor-feeding every year on the anniversaries of these *Sallekhanas*."

At 11 p.m. the Emperor felt a pre-monition of death, and asked Chanakya to crown Bindusara and to look after him and the Empire. "He is a boy," said he, "and you must look after him and the Empire. I want a solemn promise from you that this will be done. Else, my

soul will not depart in peace." Chanakya gave him the promise with tears in his eyes and said, "Vrishala, you won't die yet." "I feel death approaching, and I am not afraid to die," said Chandragupta. "Now that you have agreed to look after Bindusara I can die in peace. What do you think of *Sallekhana*? Could an Arya afflicted with an incurable disease like me have taken that vow

"No," said Chanakya "that is

for us *Sanatan Hindus*.

even the *Sati* of a wife.

How can such an advanced thinker

for a man of one sect

"What is there strange

his *Dharma*. Another's

doctor, not a potter, should

Chanakya. "I feel terribly

"Let some Brahmins recite the

and *Bhagavata*." Chanakya had this done at once. "To-day Sri Rama won his victory over Ravana. It is a holy day. I wish I too had gone to Rameswaram and seen the ocean offer eternal ablution to Rama and Siva," said Chandragupta. Then, calling Chanakya to his side, he told him, "I wish it were *Uttarayanam*." "Don't worry," said Chanakya. "You are Chandragupta of the lunar line, and will naturally go by the *Chandramana* way. After thousands of years in Heaven you will return to the earth, and be re-born in some royal house. You and I cannot expect not to be re-born. We have done too many things in our lives for us not to be re-born." "Well, crown Bindusara quickly. Let me see it with my own eyes before I die."

Chanakya had the Council of Ministers, the Generals, the Mayor, the Lord Chief Justice, and the Magistrates ushered into the room. Then he told them, "Representatives

of the *Janapada* of Magadha, King Chandragupta, Beloved of the Gods, has selected Prince Bindusara Amitraghata to succeed him as King, and wants him to be crowned now. Are you all agreed?" "Yes," said they with one voice. "And you Prince Bindusara, do you promise to rule Magadha justly, to protect the Brahmins and cows, and to see that every caste prospers?" "Yes," said Bindusara with tears streaming down his cheeks. Chanakya then took the Crown from Chandragupta and placed it on Bindusara's head and exclaimed: "Long live His Majesty Bindusara Amitraghâta, Beloved of the Gods!" Then the Councillors withdrew.

Chandragupta asked his grandsons to be brought. Sumana and Asoka were brought in by Sonottara. The Emperor patted them, and especially Asoka who was his favourite, and shed tears. Then the little Princes were taken away, and the Emperor took leave of his Queens. Devabhranta was calm and collected, and gave him a brave and understanding smile. Durdhara sobbed with grief. Santavati gave him a look in which were mixed reproach at his deserting her, and incredulity at his impending departure. A few minutes after the Queens had left him, the Emperor went into a coma. The Palace Physician, who was in attendance with a band of experts, tried his best but could not bring him back to consciousness. In an hour more, Chandragupta died without recovering consciousness. The triple test was applied. A mirror held to the nose was not clouded over by the exhaled breath. Ginger-powder blown into the nose gently did not cause any re-action. The pulse-beat too had stopped. "His Majesty, King Chandragupta, Beloved of the Gods, has gone to Heaven. Ram! Ram!" said Chanakya, and then broke down and sobbed like a child.

The spectators were amazed to see this man of steel break down like that. They had not dreamt of such a possibility even in their wildest speculations. They listened with growing wonder as Chanakya sobbed aloud and cried, "Oh Vrishala, why have you gone leaving me behind? You and I went through many perils together. We were fellow-actors in an exciting drama, and we ought to have left the stage together. Vrishala! all others regard me as a cold-blooded cruel-hearted scheming politician. Only Gautami and you knew that I was human like you. And now you have gone. I have only Gautami left." Rakshasa went to him and said, "Reverend sir, let the new King be proclaimed in the Town and Empire without delay." Chanakya rose and said, "Yes. Let them proclaim His Majesty Bindusara Amitraghâta, the Beloved of the Gods, as King throughout the Empire. Let the Magistrates do it in Pataliputra at once."

Then he went into the ladies' enclosure, whither the corpse had been removed. Durdhara wept over the corpse as if her heart would break. Devabhranta stood gazing at it lovingly and respectfully. Santavati looked dazed and lifeless. Calling Chanakya, she expressed her desire to commit *Sati* on her husband's pyre. "No," said Chanakya, "it is a sin condemned by the Sages." "It is a custom in our part of the country," said she, "though not followed among the Prachyas." "You became a Prachya on marrying a Prachya," said Chanakya, "and so cannot commit *Sati*. Look after the tender Princes, Sumana and Asoka, and further your husband's wishes that way. I beseech you, in the name of your husband, to do so." Santavati bowed her head in assent.

The body of Chandragupta was embalmed, and lay in State for seven days, and then was taken to the royal burning-ground on the banks of the *Ganges*. In the

presence of a million people, Bindusara set fire to the sandalwood-pyre amidst the funeral-*Mantras* uttered by hundreds of Brahmins. Chanakya watched the corpse till it was entirely consumed. Then, he turned to Bindusara and wept and said, "At least he had you to burn his corpse. I haven't got even a son to do that." "By the time Your Reverence dies, Radhagupta will be old enough to render that last rite," said Bindusara. Going home, he mentioned this conversation to Santavati, Durdhara, Devabhranta, Suryakanta, Lajjavati and Subhadrangi who were awaiting his return. "So, he too is susceptible to human weaknesses like us," said Durdhara. "The world has come to regard Chanakya as a Force of Nature unaffected by sentiment, something like an earthquake or avalanche. But, all the same, my son, let us thank God that there is Chanakya between you and all political earthquakes and avalanches."